

# HOW TO TEACH A FOREIGN LANGUAGE



*by the same author*

LANGUAGE, ITS NATURE, DEVELOPMENT  
AND ORIGIN

CHAPTERS ON ENGLISH

THE PHILOSOPHY OF GRAMMAR

ESSENTIALS OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR

NOVIAL LEXIKE

A MODERN ENGLISH GRAMMAR ON  
HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

MANKIND, NATION AND INDIVIDUAL

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OTTO JESPERSEN  
HOW TO TEACH A  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Translated from  
the Danish original by  
Sophia Yhlen-Olsen Bertelsen  
M.A.

*This was sometimes a paradox, but  
now the time gives it proof*

HAMLET

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## PREFACE

WHEN, in accordance with a wish expressed by English and American friends, I determined to have my *Sprogundervisning* translated into English, I found it difficult to decide what to retain and what to leave out of the original. So much of what I had written appeared to me to apply more or less exclusively to Danish schools and Danish methods, and I had too little personal experience of the practice of English teachers or of English school-books to be quite sure of the advisability in each case of including or excluding this or that remark. I have, however, made my choice to the best of my ability, and if some parts of my criticism are not altogether applicable to English methods, I hope I may be excused on the plea that what is now the really important thing is less the destruction of bad old methods than a positive indication of the new ways to be followed if we are to have thoroughly efficient teaching in modern languages.

OTTO JESPERSEN.

GENTOFTE, .

NEAR COPENHAGEN.



## I

ABOUT twenty years ago, when I began to be interested in a reformation of the teaching of modern languages, there were not, as there are now, numerous books and articles on the subject, but merely scattered hints, especially in the works of Sweet and Storm. It was not long, however, before the movement found itself well under headway, especially in Germany. In Scandinavia it began at the appearance of the adaptation which I had made of Felix Franke's capital little pamphlet, "Die praktische spracherlernung auf grund der psychologie und der physiologie der sprache." At just about the same time, Western in Norway and Lundell in Sweden came forward with similar ideas, and at the Philological Congress in Stockholm in 1886 we three struck a blow for reform. We founded a society, of course, and we gave it the name *Quousque tandem* (which for the benefit of those not acquainted with Latin may be rendered "Cannot we soon put an end to this?"), that Ciceronian flourish with which Viëtor had shortly before heralded his powerful little pamphlet, "Der sprachunterricht muss umkehren." Our Scandinavian society published some small pamphlets, and for a time even a little quarterly paper. But the movement soon reached that second and more important stage when the

teachers began to put the reform into practice and when the editors of school-books began to give it more and more consideration, until at present it may be said that the reformed method is well on the way to permanent favour, at least as far as younger teachers have anything to say in the matter.

What is the method, then, that I allude to? Well, if the question means, what is it called, I find myself in some embarrassment, for the method resembles other pet children in this respect, that it has many names. Though none of these are quite adequate, yet if I mention them all, I can perhaps give a little preliminary notion of what the matter is all about. The method is by some called the "new" or "newer"; in England often "die neuere richtung"; by others the "reform-method," again the "natural," the "rational," the "correct," or "sensible" (why not praise one's wares as all dealers do in their advertisements?); the "direct" comes a little nearer, the "phonetical" indicates something of its character, but not nearly enough, likewise the "phonetical transcription method," for phonetics and phonetical transcription is not all; the "imitative" again emphasizes another point, the "analytical" (as contrasted with the constructive) could perhaps also be applied to other methods; the "concrete" calls attention to something essential, but so does the German "anschauungsmethode" too; "the conversation-method" reminds us perhaps too much of Berlitz schools; words with "anti," like the "anti-classical," "antigrammatical," or "antitranslation" method, are clumsy and stupidly negative—so there is nothing left for us but to give up the attempt to find a name, and

recognize that this difficulty is due to the fact that it is not one thing, but many things that we have to reform, and that is of course the reason why the reformers themselves fall into so many sub-parties: the one lays all the stress on one point, the other on another point. However, there is certainly enough to do for any one who wants to get better results out of the teaching of foreign languages than have hitherto been the rule.

It also speaks much in favour of the reform that it is impossible to name the "new" method after some founder, just as in olden days we had Lancaster's, Hamilton's, Jacotot's methods; later, Robertson's, Ollendorff's, Ahn's, Toussaint-Langenscheidt's, Plötz's, Listov's methods, and as we of later years have Berlitz's and Gouin's methods for the teaching of foreign languages. If in old Norse mythology, the god Heimdall had nine mothers, our reform-method has at least seven wise fathers. In this respect it differs essentially from all the methods just mentioned: each one of them is named after a single man, and he in return is as a rule only remembered as the originator of his method. Our method, on the other hand, owes its origin to men who, for other reasons, may claim a place among the most eminent linguistic scholars of the last decades (Sweet, Storm, Sievers, Sayce, Lundell, and others), and the ideas which they have conceived have been adopted and applied to life with many practical innovations and changes by a large number of educators and schoolmasters (I may mention almost at random Klinghardt, Walter, Kühn, Dörr, Quiehl, Rossmann, Wendt, Widgery, Western, Brekke); on the boundary between both groups stand

especially Viëtor and Paul Passy. That shows that it is not with theoretical sophistries that we have to do ; it is not the whim of one man, but the sum of all the best linguistical and pedagogical ideas of our times, which, coming from many different sources, have found each other, and have made a beautiful alliance for the purpose of overturning the old routine. Modern languages, which were formerly treated like Cinderella in our schools and universities, begin to feel of age, and want to have a word to say, because they cannot put up with various arrangements which may have been more or less satisfactory for the classical languages, but do not suit modern languages at all. These want to be treated as *living*, and the method of teaching them must be as elastic and adaptable as life is restless and variable.

What is the *object* in the teaching of modern languages ? Well, why have we our native tongue ? Certainly in order to get the most out of a life lived in a 'community of our fellow-countrymen, in order to exchange thoughts, feelings and wishes with them, both by receiving something of their psychical contents and by communicating to them something of what dwells in us. Language is not an end in itself, just as little as railway tracks ; it is a way of connection between souls, a means of communication. And it is not even the only one ; expression of countenance, gesture, etc., yes, even a forcible box on the ear can tell me what is taking place in the mind of one of my fellow-creatures. But language is the most complete, the richest, the best means of communication ; it bridges the psychical chasm between individuals in manifold cases when they otherwise would

wander about isolated and cut off from all intelligent sympathy.

The purpose in learning foreign languages, then, must be in order to get a way of communication with places which our native tongue cannot reach, for there too may be persons with whom I, for some reason or other, desire to exchange thoughts, or at least from whom I wish to receive thoughts. And herein really lies already the answer to the question : which languages shall we give the preference ? Compare the advantage of being able to talk with the inhabitants of the Fiji Islands in their own language with the advantage of being conversant with French or German. If all that we desire or all that we can ever hope to attain in any one language is to receive thoughts, to acquaint ourselves with the works of foreign authors, while we ourselves neither expect nor wish to be able to impart our own thoughts in it, it is always a question if it is not better to use translations than to learn the language itself, especially in the case of the dead languages. A translation is, to be sure, no perfect substitute for the original, but on the other hand one has to know the foreign language pretty well in order to get more out of the original than out of the translation. Then how does the balance stand between the debit-side—the work of learning the language—and the credit-side—the extra profit thus to be got from the authors' works ? It is of course a question which must be decided separately for every individual case, and there are many circumstances which may have to be considered ; but most people will not lose anything if they read Tolstoi or Omar Khayyám in English.

The objection may be raised that there are also other reasons for learning foreign languages. A student of comparative philology, for instance, studies languages for their own sake, without caring if they can serve him as a means of learning anything that he did not know before, or that he could learn much more conveniently in some other way; he may often be very much interested in languages which have no literature at all, or which are spoken by peoples with whom he never comes into contact. But this study, which may be compared to the study of other means of communication for their own sake, locomotive-construction, railway signal-service, etc.—only that it is probably much more interesting—is clearly a special study, which has nothing to do with the reasons why people generally learn languages. Although it undoubtedly is an advantage for every educated person to know something about the life of language, yet I think it will suffice for me merely to touch upon the theoretical study of languages here and there in the following pages, so much the more as it is never with this end in view that any language is placed on the school programme.

Neither were Latin and Greek introduced into our schools for the sake of training the pupils in logic, no matter how much it may occasionally be insisted upon that exactly this is their real value. But it is not necessary to waste many words on this matter, especially since all competent classical scholars—also those who insist upon a privileged position for the classical languages in our schools—have long ago given up as unscholarly the idea that the Latin (or Greek) language should be more logical in construction than, for

instance, French or English. And there is no doubt much truth in what Robert Browning says: "Learning Greek teaches Greek, and nothing else; certainly not common sense, if that have failed to precede the teaching!"<sup>1</sup>

But on the other hand it must not be overlooked that everything which is learned with a sensible end in view, and according to a sensible method, tends in itself more or less directly to develop valuable faculties, and that especially the teaching of languages, in addition to the actual results which it gives through the contents of what one reads in foreign languages, is an excellent means of training such important faculties as—

the faculty of observing (of observing correctly, of observing independently),  
the faculty of classifying under different points of view that which has been observed,  
the faculty of deducing general laws from the material collected by observation,  
the faculty of drawing conclusions and applying them to other cases than the ones hitherto met with,  
—all, of course, faculties that are nearly related—also the ability to read in general, to read intelligently, and with reflection.

In the construction of our method of teaching, especially if it is to be used in schools, we must also take these things into consideration. Any instruction in languages which merely consisted in a parrot-like repetition of the words of the teacher or the book, if indeed such a method is con-

<sup>1</sup> Preface to his translation of the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus.

ceivable, would not be in place in our schools, and besides no one, so far as I know, has ever tried to introduce such a pure parrot-method there.

The teacher must make the pupils feel interested in the subject ; they must have a vivid conception of the reward that their work will bring them, so that it will seem worth while for them to exert themselves. They must feel that their instruction in languages gives them a key, and that there are plenty of treasures that it will open for them ; they must see that the literature to which they have gained access contains numerous works which also have messages for them ; and they must, to so great an extent as possible in the course of the instruction in a certain language, also have got an interest in the land and people concerned, so that they themselves will make an effort to extend their knowledge about these things. There is thus laid a good foundation for their whole life—and the saying “*non scholæ sed vitæ*” ought not to be interpreted, as too many (especially parents) do : learn not for the school, but in order to pass a good examination, so that you may prosper in life, and by virtue of your examination get a good position. The school ought to equip its youth in the very best manner for life, and the teacher ought not out of consideration for examination requirements to neglect or hinder anything which otherwise is good. A word about examinations later ; here I simply want to warn the teacher against troubling the examination until the examination troubles him. Many of the things which I have to recommend in the following pages, I have time and again heard teachers recognize as really sensible, but they are only afraid of them

on account of the examination for which they have to prepare their pupils. The answer to that is, teach in the right way, then there will be life and love in it all, and when the examination comes your pupils will know more than if your teaching from the very beginning had been fettered by examination requirements. The pupils really learn most when they continually have a feeling that it is all something useful and valuable, and that it is not too far elevated above that actual life which they either know or are beginning to get some notion of.

We learn languages, then (our native tongue as well as others), so as to be enabled to get sensible first-hand communications about the thoughts of others, and so as to have for ourselves too (if possible) a means of making others partakers of our own thoughts; and if we consider what kind of communications we may be more likely to get through a foreign language than through our own, the highest purpose in the teaching of languages may perhaps be said to be the access to the best thoughts and institutions of a foreign nation, its literature, culture—in short, the spirit of the nation in the widest sense of the word. But at the same time we must remember that we cannot reach the goal with one bound, and that there are many other things on the way which are also worth taking in. We do not learn our native tongue merely so as to be able to read Shakespeare and Browning, and neither do we learn it for the sake of giving orders to the shoemaker or making out the washerwoman's bill. So likewise in the case of foreign languages, we ought not exclusively to soar above the earth, nor on the other hand exclusively to grovel on

the ground; between those two spheres there are large fields in manifold shades where it might be of great value for us to stand in direct communication with other nations.

## II

We may already from what has been said draw some conclusions as to the method which we ought to use. We ought to learn a language through sensible communications ; there must be (and this as far as possible from the very first day) a certain connection in the thoughts communicated in the new language. Disconnected words are but stones for bread ; one cannot say anything sensible with mere lists of words. Indeed not even disconnected sentences ought to be used, at all events, not in such a manner and to such an extent as in most books according to the old method. For there is generally just as little connexion between them as there would be in a newspaper if the same line were read all the way across from column to column. I shall take a few specimens at random from a French reader that is much used : "My aunt is my mother's friend. My dear friend, you are speaking too rapidly. That is a good book. We are too old. This gentleman is quite sad. The boy has drowned many dogs." When people say that instruction in languages ought to be a kind of mental gymnastics, I do not know if one of the things they have in mind is such sudden and violent leaps from one range of ideas to another.

In another French schoolbook we find : " Nous sommes à Paris, vous êtes à Londres. Louise et Amélie, où êtes-vous? Nous avons trouvé la lettre sur la table. Avez-vous pris le livre? Avons-nous été à Berlin? Amélie, vous êtes triste. Louis, avez-vous vu Philippe? Sommes-nous à Londres?"

The speakers seem to have a strange sense of locality. First, they say that they themselves are in Paris, but the one (the ones?) that they are speaking with are in London (conversation by telephone?); then they cannot remember if they themselves have been in Berlin; and at last they ask if they themselves are in London. Unfortunately, they get no answer, for the next sentence is. "Pierre, vous avez pris la canne."

Or take some of the books which are supposed to help Danes learn English. They are no better. In one (which appeared in 1889) we find : "The joiner has made this chair. What a fine sunshine! For whom do you make this bed? Which of you will have this box? I should like to have it. Of whom have you got this cake? I am very fond of cakes. I have borrowed a great deal of books from a public library."

From a "practical" primer in English, which appeared in its second edition in 1893, I take the following specimens : "Are the king's horses very old? No; but the duke's carriage is old. Is it older than your friend's? . . . Has the nobleman told you the news? No, sir; but the lady has told me the news about the business and the wedding. Why do you not give the negro a house? No, sir; but I can tell you that the German has given each of

the negroes a pretty little house. Has the lady a knife? Yes, the lady has two knives. Why do you not give the ladies the German's keys to the church? The noblemen have the German's keys."

I could give you almost any number of that kind of specimens. The ones I have chosen are not even of the very worst type, since there is (some sort of) meaning in each sentence by itself. But what shall we say when, in a German reader, to the question *Wo seid ihr?* we find the answer, *Wir sind nicht hier!* The author of that book also seems to have had a very vivid imagination when it came to the use of pluperfects. "Your book had not been large. Had you been sensible? Your horse had been old." We ask ourselves in surprise, when did this wonderful horse then cease to be old? But that kind of material information is not given in the book; it stops at the sphinx-like remark: *Dein Pferd war alt gewesen.* Could it really have been that kind of schoolbooks that the Danish writer, Søren Kierkegaard, alluded to when he wrote that language had been given to man, not in order to conceal his thoughts, as Talleyrand asserted, but in order to conceal the fact that he had no thoughts?

Now it must immediately be admitted that there may be a big difference in the schoolbooks made, even according to this single-sentence system. It never seems to have occurred to the authors of some of them that there might be a limit to the amount of rubbish that can be offered children under the pretext of teaching them grammar. Others again try to give sentences which are both sensible and in accordance with a child's natural range of ideas.

With respect to the latter principle, there has been steady progress from the times when the sentences either were moral rules of conduct and philosophical profundities, or selections about Greek heroes, etc. But even in the best modern books the exercises are often strangely disjointed (cf., for instance, this exercise from one of the better books : "My brother had not many lessons yesterday. Where had you been ? The weather had been fine for a long time. This boy had only been in our house three or four weeks. Has your uncle had many tulips this year ? How long had you had this frock ?"), and even if they are not so glaringly nonsensical as some others, yet their very disconnectedness makes them bad enough.

It is easy enough, however, to find something to make fun of in all such books. Let us then rather ask the reason why this system has so long been dominant. Its defenders will, of course, refer to the difficulties in all connected reading exercises; even the simplest stories contain so many grammatical forms, and so many words, that the beginner would be overwhelmed and confused by having them all thrown at him at once. There must be gradual progress in difficulty, that is, the material for instruction must be arranged in stages from very easy to more and more difficult things, and this is supposed to be attainable only by means of disconnected sentences. The principle is sound, but it is unsound to put it into practice in such a manner that other pedagogical principles which are just as sound are neglected. Should pedagogy not also demand some sense in what one treats the children to ? But, as we have seen, it is not always so easy to find the sense.

And should it not also be of some significance to attract the interest of the pupils? Nothing seems hard to a willing mind. That which is associated with pleasant recollections has a firmer place in the memory than dry stuff. But exercises where it alternates between the Frenchman who has taken the Englishman's hat and the Englishman who has taken the Frenchman's cane, or where either Marie sees Louise's dog or Peter sees Henry's horse—they cannot be anything but boring, even if they give the pupils ever so gradual practice in the use of the genitive. Grown persons can, of course, put up with a little boredom, if they think they can attain anything by it; but in their heart of hearts they find such things killing, and so they are; yes, even killing for the linguistic sense. Children can, of course, put up with a good deal, too, when they have a teacher who can win their respect and affection; they also put up with many things only for the sake of getting good marks, or when they are stimulated by other equally unsound means. But still, it is better to avoid boring them.

I suppose it is also of pedagogical importance for the teaching to be correct. But here we have just one of those points where we see what evil results may come of the system of disconnected sentences: it is so extremely easy for them to become stilted; indeed, even incorrect. Some examples may be found in the exercise already cited on p. 12, where the sentence, "For whom do you make this bed?" is not good English, at any rate, and where "a great deal of books" is a bad blunder for "a great many

books." It is really easier to write a long connected piece in a foreign language about something that one is interested in than to construct merely eight disconnected sentences for the illustration of a couple of grammatical rules, and without using other words than those the pupils already have had. As impossible, even if not positively incorrect, I consider such sentences as the following, to which any one can find many parallels :—" Tie. Do not tie. Fetch. Do not fetch. . . . Give. Do not give." . . . Judged as thoughts they are unfinished or half-finished ideas. Judged as language, they are also very problematical. Such questions, as "Do I take?" require the necessary information as to what and when. Such fragments of sentences are never heard in real life.

Finally, sentences of this kind give the pupil quite an erroneous notion of what language is on the whole, and of the relation between different languages. He is too apt to get the impression that language means a collection of words which are isolated and independent, and that there must be a corresponding word in his native tongue for each new foreign word that he learns. These words are then shoved about without any real purpose according to certain given rules, somewhat after the manner of a puzzle that was popular some years ago. The mistake thus made is by Sweet called the arithmetical fallacy, because languages are taken as collections of units where the order of the addends and the factors is immaterial. Everything that is idiomatic in the languages is quite set aside, at all events for the time being, without consideration for the fact that the most indispensable expressions often are those irrational groups

which cannot be constructed merely of words and grammatical rules, expressions like "What's the matter? I couldn't help laughing. Serve you right. Ça va sans dire. Ça y est. Voilà qui est drôle. Wie spät haben Sie? Wer ist jetzt an der Reihe? Sie sind dran. Was ist denn los?" Where the Englishman circumstantially says "ring the bell," the Frenchman has the short "sonnez," etc., etc. When the pupil does not get a good deal of that kind of thing as soon as possible, but for years continues translating word-groups of the arithmetical kind until he is well drilled in all the rules of the grammar, the result is that when he is left to his own resources he takes each word of the English phrase that happens to occur to him and translates it literally into the language which he is trying to speak.<sup>1</sup> That is how we come to hear such ridiculous things as "Ich konnte nicht helfen zu lachen."

It is grammar that plays the chief rôle. A characteristic teacher's report is: "In the course of the school-year we have gone through accidente as far as the third class of verbs." The *raison d'être* of each sentence lies merely in its value for the grammatical exercises, so that by reading schoolbooks one often gets the impression that Frenchmen must be strictly systematical beings, who one day speak merely in futures, another day in *passé définis*, and who say the most disconnected things only for the sake of being able to use all the persons in the tense which for the time

<sup>1</sup> A funny instance of the arithmetical fallacy is the following sign in Copenhagen:

Stövle—og skomager.  
Boot—and shoemaker.  
Botte—et cordonnier.

being happens to be the subject for conversation, while they carefully postpone the use of the subjunctive until next year.

Now, as misfortune will have it, although the whole system is planned for drilling in grammar, this end is by no means attained by these too systematical exercises. The pupils get the scent of what is to be used in a certain exercise, and they use it mechanically there, but they do not learn how to transfer it to other connexions, so if they suddenly have to use a future in an exercise on the pluperfect the future form is apt to bear a suspicious resemblance to the pluperfect form ; when the pupils are being drilled in the endings of the fourth declension, and a word belonging to the third declension happens to have crept in, it is very difficult to get it correctly declined without any reminiscence of fourth-class endings, etc. I once read a pedagogical article by a German schoolmaster, I think it was, who had discovered that the reason why there were so many poor Latin exercises written was that the pupils often had to apply several rules of syntax in one and the same sentence ; if the sentences were only so made that each one of them contained but one grammatical phenomenon, it would soon be seen how clever the pupils could be. Yes, how pleasant it would be if life too could be so arranged as to have the difficulties come one at a time.

As previously remarked, there is too little attention paid to what is idiomatical, and sentences constructed by non-natives are apt to be of the kind that never would occur to a native, even if it may be difficult enough to find positive "mistakes" in them. Many of the French and German

sentences in our schoolbooks must surely have the same air of unreality for a native as not a few of those found in English primers published abroad have for an Englishman.

Very closely connected with the idiomatical elements of a language are its characteristics of style, and in this respect too our schoolbooks are clumsy enough, for words which belong merely to elevated or specially poetical style are bundled together with every-day words in the very beginning of the first primer without any caution to the pupil against using them. A foreigner who wants to learn English has first of all use for words like "grief, sorrow," but he had better postpone acquaintance with "woe," otherwise he is as likely as not to make himself ridiculous by saying "it was a great woe to me." "Unwilling" is more necessary than "loth," "wash" than "lave," "lonely" or "forsaken" than "forlorn," etc. But on one of the very first pages of Listov's English Reader, which is written for beginners, we find "I bid him go," which is altogether old-fashioned, stiff and bookish (for: I told him to go, I asked him to go, or I ordered . . .), and in the same book "foe" is preferred to the ordinary, indispensable "enemy." And in several English primers the unnatural "commence" is used all the way through instead of the natural "begin"; likewise the rare "purchase" for the everyday "buy"—the only reason which I can think of is that the ordinary, indispensable words follow irregular declensions and inflexions.

The beginner has only use for the most everyday words; he ought to have nothing to do with the vocabulary of poetry or even of more elevated prose; like everything superfluous,

it is detrimental, because it burdens the memory and hinders perfect familiarity with that which is most necessary. It will, moreover, be impossible for him to get a proper conception of the linguistic effectiveness of poetry and elevated prose, when he is so far advanced as to read the good writers, because from his very first lesson in the language he has learned the literary expressions side by side with the phrases of normal prose and everyday conversation. But even among words not belonging to the language of literature, many may without scruple be postponed in order to make room for the most necessary words, which must be learned in such a manner that one always may have them on hand without the slightest hesitation. In Miss Goldschmidt's picture-method (which is now used a good deal outside of its native land, Denmark, and also in large part deserves the popularity and praise which it has won), I find, for instance, not less than 58 words for that 'many more or less intimate articles of women's clothing ; and when I in the same book under the heading "cuisine" find 46 words, among others, "bouilloire tamis, passoire, pelle à main, puisoire, lavette, canelle évier, coquetier, écumoire, entonnoir, pilon, râtelier, râpe oillot, manne," I cannot help feeling thankful that no one ever tormented me with learning them ; it seems to me I have got along pretty well in Paris and elsewhere in French conversations, just as I have read many French books, without knowing all these technical words. But, on the other hand, I have a strong notion that I should not have got along so well in conversation, and should not have been able to read French so well, if my vocabulary

had been limited to the one in Miss Goldschmidt's pictures.

The usual treatment of grammar, too, involves the learning of a number of words that one has no use for. There are few words which even the stupidest pupils in French and English have so pat as "louse," and the reason is that the plural of both "pou" and "louse" happens to be something out of the ordinary. For as soon as a word is declined differently from the usual paradigms, it has to be learned for the sake of so-called completeness. Thus we had to learn in school the rigmarole: "amussis, ravis. sitis, tussis, vis" and usually also "febris, pelvis, puppis. restis, turris, securis," where "vis vim" (perhaps also "sitis sitim") would have sufficed; the others (with meanings like ruler, hoarseness, rope), I am sure, never occurred in what we read of Latin literature, and as far as the last words are concerned, why it would not have made any difference anyway if we had let the accusative end in "—em," if we had to use the word in a catch exercise. And then there was the "long rigmarole" which it was our pride to be able to run through without winking: "amnis. axis," etc., and which doubtless has cost us all some hours of drudgery before we could quite make it stick. Of the words in it, "scobis, sentis, torris, vectis," at least, were entirely superfluous for us—aside from the fact that if by some wonderful chance we should come across one of the words in the course of our reading, we were sure enough to remember that the word stood in the long rigmarole, but why it stood there or what the word meant, that was apt to be quite forgotten. Well, it did not make much difference in so far as the chances were a thousand to one that for un-

derstanding the passage in question it was absolutely of no consequence if we had remembered that the word was masculine. (It may be of some comfort to add that some of them may also be feminine: the old Romans were not always as big pedants as Latin teachers would like to make them out to be.) Sweet writes: "In the German grammar I began with the word *Hornung*, 'February,' was given as an exception to the rule that nouns in *-ung* are feminine, and for many years no German word was more familiar to me, except perhaps *petschaft*, 'seal,' whose acquaintance I made at the same time and in the same way. But to the present day I cannot remember having met with either of them in any modern German book, still less of ever having heard them in conversation, *Hornung* being now entirely obsolete except in some German dialects. At last, when I began Middle High Grammar, I met with it for the first time in my life in a poem of Walther von der Vogelweide, but by this time I had forgotten all about it."<sup>1</sup>

In most English grammars for foreigners, the word *caiman* plays such an important part that the children never can forget it, and this is just because it is not *caimen* in the plural; likewise it is carefully inculcated on the pupils that *die* meaning "a stamp used for coining money" has the plural *dies*, but it is scarcely probable that one in a thousand will ever have any use for the word in this sense; cf. Storm's remark on *travail* quoted below.

Much of that kind of thing has fortunately been removed from the schoolbooks of later years, but there is no doubt still some weeding to be done.

<sup>1</sup> Sweet, *Practical Study of Languages*, p. 110.

## III

ON the basis of the above negative criticism, we may perhaps formulate the following positive requirements for those reading selections which are to be the foundation for instruction in languages, namely that as far as possible they must

- (1) be connected, with a sensible meaning,
- (2) be interesting, lively, varied,
- (3) contain the most necessary material of the language first, especially the material of every-day language,
- (4) be correct French (German, etc.),
- (5) pass gradually from that which is easy to that which is more difficult,
- (6) yet without too much consideration for what is merely grammatically easy or difficult.

This order does not indicate the relative importance or value of the requirements, which might be difficult to determine. If there should be any disagreement between them, I suppose it is generally best to try to find some practical compromise. We must now pass on to examine some of these requirements more closely.

The use of *connected* texts in the elementary teaching of

languages has already previously been tried, but it seems as if in the effort to avoid the Scylla of disconnected sentences it has been impossible to escape the Charybdis of such texts as Chateaubriand's *Atala*, Dickens' *Christmas Carol* (Méthode Toussaint-Langenscheidt), the New Testament, or Cæsar's *Gallic War*, etc. How often after such experiments, when the pupil was overwhelmed and did not learn anything because he was to learn everything at once, has not the teacher returned in despair to the disconnected sentences.

But between the two extremes there is no doubt room for the golden mean of beginning with quite short connected pieces, and then gradually, as each lesson may be lengthened, passing over to longer texts—of course this does not necessarily mean that a whole piece must always be taken for each lesson ; the breaks in the lessons do not need to correspond to the breaks in the text-book.

Anecdotes meet the requirements in so far as they are short connected pieces, and therefore they play such an important part in many readers. But yet they are not quite the thing, especially when they are used in too great numbers. A pointed anecdote can only be really funny once ; if it is to be repeated many times, it soon becomes stale and indeed more tiresome than most other things. And just the very quality which makes it amusing makes it less valuable for teaching purposes ; that is, an anecdote must by its very nature contain as few words as possible ; but it is better for beginners to get a little broader colouring, so that the most necessary words and phrases may recur frequently. If many anecdotes follow one upon the

other, it is not easy to avoid frequent jumps between totally different spheres of thought and accordingly between totally different worlds of words ; this increases the difficulty, and the result is apt to be that words and expressions once learned are soon forgotten. Anecdotes depending upon puns cannot be appreciated at all without full familiarity with the words resembling each other, and that can only in a minority of cases be assumed for our pupils. The best way to use anecdotes in teaching languages is to let them serve as spice in or in connection with other pieces, especially descriptive pieces, so that the words used in the anecdotes may there appear in their natural surroundings. This can best be done in short stories about animals ; in my own books for beginners in English, I have taken several such pieces from purely scientific works by Sir John Lubbock, Romanes, Tylor, etc. I mention these as examples of a kind of texts which seem to me to be especially attractive (but which are neither so easy to get hold of nor to concoct), because they give entertaining and sensible information about things which are often neglected in the natural science instruction itself, and at the same time they give an opportunity of learning a good deal of useful language-material without being too difficult. The pieces which are merely descriptive of nature, and which Sweet lays so much stress upon, have the advantage that they in a still greater degree allow of the employment of the most indispensable material of language, and that a number of the sentences may be made self-explanatory (*v. below*). There are, however, but relatively few subjects that can be dealt with in this way—the

most elementary natural phenomena—and when they are not written in such a masterly manner as in Sweet's *Elementarbuch des gesprochenen Englisch*, there are apt to be so many well-known truths told in these pieces that the interest flags.

In deciding on what will be of interest as a selection for reading, differences in age must of course to a great extent be taken into consideration. But it is an experience which I myself have had, and in which many teachers bear me out, that beginners in a foreign language may very well be interested in certain reading matter even if they are beyond the age when corresponding things would interest them in their native language. So one must not be afraid of childish texts ; but by this I do not mean to recommend a certain kind of juvenile literature which flourishes in all countries, and which aunts, especially the unmarried ones, often think that children appreciate, and so they themselves also proceed to produce it in large quantities, that is, milk-and-water stories and verses about the reward of good children and the frightful punishment of the naughty ones ; both young and old find such "literature" nauseating, and it were best to avoid it in text-books in foreign languages. But there is another class of literature, that collected by folklorists, which is orally transmitted from generation to generation, and which shows its vigour by being continually amusing and by continually shooting new shoots. Much of it can successfully be used in teaching languages ; and that which amuses a French child of five or six years may often amuse an English child of ten or eleven or even more, because in the foreign

language it gets the charm that always is connected with the unknown.

Much of this material—and of other material, which, without belonging to popular tradition, is related to it—is in verse-form, which has the great advantage for our purpose, that rhythm and rhyme naturally rivet the words and expressions fast to each other, so that the memory gets hold of them like an unbreakable chain. It is only with great difficulty and with much repetition that prose sentences can be inculcated in a certain given form ; but to learn verse is like play—it learns itself. If therefore the poetry of art, with its more or less unnatural language, is unsuitable for the beginner, the little witty natural verses of the genuine children's literature are, on the other hand, excellent. But of course not even these are always pure pearls, and there are many of them to be rejected as containing impertinences, nonsense-words, fragments of antiquated language, or words which beginners have no use for ; it seems to me, for instance, that Viëtor and Dörr should not have transferred the nursery rhymes wholesale (even the old forms with *—th* in the third person, and much more) into their otherwise excellent English reader.

With respect to the requirement that the reading must be *easy*—or rather that there must be gradual progress from easy to difficult—it must be recognized that difficulty may depend upon several different things.

In the first place, the subject-matter may be too difficult ; it ought never to be beyond the horizon of the pupils. As previously remarked, in the very beginning, one may even take something simpler than what would otherwise be suit-

able for persons of that age. But later, on the other hand, the subject-matter ought not to be too light; it is well, as soon as possible, to use matter which really has a permanent value of its own. A large part of the reading will no doubt always be taken from lighter literature, and most of it will not cause any real difficulty as far as the comprehension of the subject-matter is concerned. But in addition to that, there ought surely to be read to a far greater extent than has hitherto been the case in modern language instruction, matter which cannot be understood without some serious thinking, articles on natural science and on human relations in the widest sense of the word, political speeches, etc. Many teachers seem to be afraid to read anything else with their pupils than the most insignificant novel-literature whose contents furnish starvation food. A little friend of mine seven years old once said to his mother: "I like that best which I can scarcely understand." He thereby expressed the same thought as Dante when he said that man is not happy unless he strains every nerve, or Stuart Mill in his remark: "A pupil who is never required to do what he cannot do never does what he can do." All instruction must spur the pupil on with problems that are not too easy; in the first stage of instruction in languages, there are problems enough in the purely linguistic difficulties; later on the contents of the reading, too, ought to require some independent powers of assimilation. Sometimes it may even be best to chose selections where the language is very easy, but the matter rather weighty—especially in teaching according to the reform-method, where subject-matter is necessarily assigned a more

important part than hitherto, and where even an easy text can in various ways be advantageously employed as a means of training in purely linguistic skill.

Even linguistic easiness or difficulty may depend upon different things. Difficulties in pronunciation ought not to be piled up, a caution applying especially to selections for the very first beginners. Some teachers try to begin with words which may be almost or wholly pronounced with sounds occurring in the native language of the pupils. Aside from the fact that in most cases it only leads to disappointment to exaggerate the resemblance between the foreign and native sounds, this principle may easily lead to slovenliness at a stage when it might involve the most dangerous consequences. The pupil ought from the very first lesson to have the clearest sensation of being on foreign ground, and he ought to realize that the foreign sounds cannot be learned without work. But the difficult sounds ought not to occur too many in succession or in too difficult combinations. It is perhaps best to begin with words of one syllable, but this need not be strictly carried through. I do not, however, attach so much importance to mere difficulties in pronunciation that I would advise an otherwise suitable opening selection in a French reader for beginners to be discarded because it contained such difficult words as *manger* and *chien*. It cannot be long, anyway, before the pupils must make acquaintance with, and, what is more, master all the sounds in the language they are about to learn. By difficulties in pronunciation here I mean the real ones, and not such apparent difficulties as are due to freaks of orthography; it is equally trouble

for a German to pronounce English *pear* and *pair*; such difficulties as are found in English *scarce*, *fatigue*, *victuals*, French *eût*, *pupille*, *pitié*, *balbutier*, etc., may be overcome by a panacea which I shall come to later, namely, phonetical transcription.

Furthermore linguistic difficulty may be due to the use of too many new words, and in this respect the best principle at all stages is: as few new words as possible. Every one who has read such pages as often occur in Zola or Daudet, where technical expressions are abundantly piled up, will have had the experience that even with the most careful reading or study it did not take long before all the new words were just as unfamiliar as before the selection was read. Likewise, when one sets to work to learn systematic vocabularies like Plötz's *Vocabulaire Systématique*, it requires enormous exertion and a long time to learn them, and it takes an amazingly short time to unlearn them again. But if, in the course of one's reading, the new words turn up occasionally at relatively large intervals, then the mind is able to absorb the one before the next appears; the intervening passages, which contain only familiar things, manure the soil, as it were, for the new things that are to be sown in it. Ten or twelve new words are more easily and more thoroughly learned when they are scattered over five pages than when they are crowded into ten lines, and then besides there is the benefit to be derived from the recurrence of a number of usual words, to say nothing of sentence-constructions, etc., so that he who has read those five pages has had more opportunity to familiarize himself with the idiosyncrasies of the foreign language than he

would have had in ten lines ; the apparent waste of time in reading the longer piece has really been profitable, for the capital which had already been acquired in the language has in that time borne interest and compound interest.

Now since it is also better, as we have said, to learn five absolutely necessary words than twenty-five of less importance, it is of course the duty of the editors of text-books in large part to revise the selections which they reprint, so that that which is of linguistic value for the pupils may be cultivated at the expense of everything that is unusual or odd. Texts whose subject-matter is good, but whose language makes them impossible for our purpose, may often be made pedagogically practicable by means of curtailing, paraphrasing, and adaptation in various ways ; many popular fairy-tales in the collections of folklorists may be used if one only will take the trouble to translate them from the dialect in which they are written. Such a splendid little story as Mrs. Ewing's *Jackanapes*, which is frequently read as it stands in German and Swedish schools, is, according to my judgment, too full of literary expressions and unnecessary words to be easily comprehended by our little pupils. In the passage which I have selected for my own primer, I have therefore in several places made considerable omissions, and the style has throughout been made more colloquial and direct, by means of corrections like these for instance : having *ceased to entertain* (given up) any hopes of his own recovery. | Tony tumbled off *during the first revolution* (before he had gone round once). | And what bright eyes *peeped out of his dark forelock as it was blown by the wind* ! (he had !) | told him that he must be on his

very best behaviour (behave properly) during the visit. If it had been feasible (possible) to leave off calling him Jackanapes and to get used to his *baptismal* (real Christian) name of Theodore before the day after to-morrow *it would have been satisfactory* (she would have done it) | said J., shaking his yellow *mop* (hair), and leaning back in his *one of the two Chippendale* armchairs *in which they sat* (the italicized words left out) | *took their early promenade* (went out for their walk) earlier than usual | His golden hair flew out, *an aureole from which his cheeks shone red and distended with trumpeting* (left out). It is very probable that on comparing the original with the revised text, it will be found that some of the colouring has been lost; I merely maintain that the pupils gain thereby. The more it is insisted upon (as according to the reform-method) that the selections are not only to be read but also to be mastered, so that their language becomes the mental property of the pupil, the more necessary is such revision. It is clear that as the pupil progresses, the texts may become more and more literary, and for various reasons the advisability of such curtailing and adaptation becomes more questionable.

As a sample of such revision, I shall reprint a part of an anecdote, (A) as it ought not to be given in a book for beginners (but as it stands in a certain English reader for foreigners) and (B) as it stands in Sweet's excellent edition:—

(A) His table, however, is constantly set out with a dozen covers, and served by suitable attendants. Who, then, are his privileged guests? No less than a dozen of favourite dogs, who daily par-

take of my lord's dinner, seated very gravely in armchairs, each with a napkin round his neck, and a servant behind to attend to his wants. These honourable quadrupeds, as if grateful for such delicate attentions, comport themselves during the repast with a decency which would do more than honour to a party of gentlemen ; but if by any chance one of them should, without due consideration, obey his natural instinct, and transgress any of the rules of good manners, his punishment is at hand.

(B) Every day he used to have dinner laid for twelve guests besides himself ; but no one was ever invited to the house. Who were the twelve covers laid for then, do you think ? For twelve dogs. Each dog had a velvet chair to sit up in, and a napkin round his neck, and a footman behind his chair to wait on him. The older dogs always behaved in the most gentlemanly manner, but it sometimes happened that one of the younger dogs forgot his manners, and snatched a chop or a piece of pudding off the plate of the dog that was sitting next to him.

Finally the difficulties may be grammatical. These are the difficulties that teachers have been most afraid of according to the old methods, so that they have even preferred to give up almost all sense and connection in the subject-matter rather than make a break in the systematical progress in grammar. Such a form as *pu* was not allowed to occur before the pupils had learned the whole

conjugation of *pouvoir* *pouvant* *pu je peux*, etc. ; these forms must be learned connectedly, it was said. But the irony of it all is that this “connectedly” means that they are learned out of all connection—and therefore to little profit. When the pupil is required to “understand” the forms which occur in his reader, it will be found on closer examination that this means merely that, for instance, *il a* is understood by the one who knows that it is 3 pers. sing. pres. of *avoir*, or who at least knows the formula *j'ai*, *tu as*, etc. ; that *yeux* is “understood” by the one who has learned that it is an irregular plural belonging to the singular *œil*, etc. ; in short, to “understand” means here to know where the form in question belongs in the grammatical system ; and the forms must be given in exactly the same order in which they are arranged in the grammar, the present before the past tense, etc. But what has the beginner got to do with all this system? The idea is not carried out consistently either, for when all the exercises on accident have been gone through, it is generally the rule to pass over to connected (unrevised) texts, where such a form as *puisse* may occur, but the only thing that the pupils get to know about it is that it is subjunctive, for it may easily take a year or two before they learn why the subjunctive is used. Why is syntax less important than accident? To be quite consistent, it ought no more to be permissible for a syntactical phenomenon than for a form in accident to occur before the corresponding grammatical section has been learned. But since it seems to be inevitable that we must be inconsistent on some point or other, it is no use beating about the bush ; in other words, we must not

be afraid of using irregular forms in the very first selection.

Grammatical irregularities, viewed from a pedagogical point of view, fall into two entirely different classes, which are too apt to be treated as if they were co-ordinate. In the first place, all languages contain a number of irregularities which play a most insignificant part both in life and in literature, because they occur so seldom. When the users of the language produce them at long intervals, it is generally with the utmost caution, because they merely have a hazy conception of what the proper form of the expressions ought to be. But they are taken up in the grammars, and as soon as one grammarian has caught sight of one of them, it is carefully copied in all succeeding grammars for the sake of completeness. Foreign grammarians are even more inclined than the natives to pay attention to everything of that kind because they have no instinctive feeling of what is rare and what is common. In some English grammars which are used on the Continent, there may still be found *I catched*, *I digged*, *I shined*, *I writ*, as the preterite forms of *I catch*, *I dig*, *I shine*, *I write*; in one, I find given as two different verbs *I weet*, *wit* or *wot*, past tense *wot*, and *I wis*, past tense *I wist*. What a big mistake it is to include such musty and impracticable forms, we can best judge from our own language—but in those French and German grammars which we ourselves write there are things which are just as bad as the above offences in English. When I went to school, I learned the following rule about the plural of *travail*, “*Travail* has *travails* in the plural when it means

a report from a minister to the king or from a subordinate official to the minister ; likewise when it means a machine to hold unruly horses, while they are being shoed." This rule is thus criticized by Storm : "Now I must say I have read many hundreds of French books in my day, but so far as I remember, I have never come across *travails* in modern literature ! In the sense of report, it occurs in Mme. de Sévigné. An educated Frenchman, when asked if the word was used with that meaning, answered me that he thought it was no longer used. So one would expect that the word had long ago ceased to have any show in modern grammars, but it seems to be continually creeping in again."

However, it is easy enough to take a position with respect to this first kind of irregularities ; they ought to be removed from the instruction as radically as possible ; they ought to be weeded out root and all to a far greater extent than has yet been done in most text-books, even if it must be admitted that something has been done in this direction of late years. It is quite another matter when we come to the other kind of irregularities, which are found in the very commonest words, in words like German *ist war, kann konnte, geht ging, ich mein, mann männer*. Those irregularities the pupil must learn, and learn thoroughly—there is no doubt about that. The only question is, at what stage? before or after the regular inflections? Most teachers will answer, after. That a systematic grammar first gives what is normal, that which can be expressed in general, comprehensive rules, and then afterwards mentions the exceptions, the isolated phenomena, that of course is all

right. But it does not necessarily follow that the pupils ought to familiarize themselves with the forms in the same order. What is won thereby? Perhaps some advantage for the theoretical knowledge about the language. But the loss incurred by this method of procedure is undoubtedly far greater. For it will be found to be absolutely impossible to arrange texts which are the least bit suitable without using irregularly inflected words, so indispensable are they. The dread of being unsystematic by taking up exceptions immediately is one of the causes of the prevalence of the disheartening series of detached sentences without any sensible meaning. It is only by freeing ourselves from this principle which requires rules first and exceptions later that we shall be able to get good texts for the teaching of beginners. Furthermore, by beginning with the regular forms, we perhaps run the risk that the pupils will analogically apply the rule even to the exceptional words, whereas the irregular forms generally deviate so much that they preclude the possibility of such mistakes. Those who have learned that the plural in English is formed by adding *s*, may perhaps construct such improper forms as *mans*, *childs*, but the plural forms *men* and *children* are not apt to tempt the pupils to inflect other words after the same pattern. But the moral of this is not that we are to turn the customary method of procedure upside down, and systematically learn the exceptions first. Here, too, nature must be our guide; just as persons talking within a child's hearing never stop to consider if the words they are using are regular or not, so we ought not to be too painfully careful in selecting or arranging the first reading-exercises

in a foreign language ; we ought to choose what is otherwise good and take the forms as they come, wasting no words at this stage to explain their place in the system. In other words, the deviating forms must be learned as if they were merely matters of vocabulary. If in one of the first pieces there stands *Il y avait une fois un roi et une reine*, it is enough for the time being if the pupil is told that *il y avait* = there was ; the forms for "there is" and "there has been" he can learn another time when he has use for them, and then the teacher can refer back to this early piece and remind the pupil about the related form which he learned before. For beginners in French, *peux*—“can” is just as difficult (or easy) as *peu*—“little,” and *faire*—“make, do,” as *fer*—“iron,” and it makes no difference if the one is regular and the other irregular. Indeed, an irregular plural like *geese* is even easier for Danes than the regular *bees* (on account of the z-sound) ; likewise, it is easier for an Englishman to learn the German irregular forms of comparison *besser best* than regular forms like *siüsser siüssest*. Later when the time has come for a more systematic study of the grammar, it will be rather an advantage that a number of the “exceptions” already have occurred at so early a stage that they are not at all felt to be strange and unusual.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the beginner ought to be spared such grammatical difficulties as are due to complicated sentence-structure. All sentences ought from the very beginning to be constructed as evenly, simply and clearly as possible ;

<sup>1</sup> It will be noticed that in the whole of this argument I agree with Sweet.

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co-ordinate independent clauses ought to be, if not the only, at least the predominating type of sentence. Not even, for instance, in the second year of Latin instruction, although there are just as many hours devoted to Latin in a year as generally fall to the share of modern languages in the course of two or three years, is it justifiable to let the pupils read the long passages of indirect discourse in Cæsar; they ought not to occur until the pupils are so far advanced that they could easily understand the same matter when directly presented. This is also a point to be kept in mind for any one who undertakes to revise the selections for reading according to the suggestions given above.

## IV

So much for the reading selections—now for the way in which they ought to be used in the classroom. I have a very vivid recollection of how most of the language lessons were conducted when I went to school, and I have a suspicion that this method of procedure has not yet quite died out, even if in many places it has more or less felt the influence of the law of change. First the “old lesson” is gone through, and that must take as little time as possible, therefore the pupil is required to be able to translate it fluently without reading it aloud first. Then we come to the “new lesson.” A boy stands up and reads a little piece out of the reader—stuttering; the words are separated from each other by pauses and various unaesthetic hm- and er-sounds, and sometimes by the teacher’s corrections, or “now hurry,” “what a terrible pronunciation!” “how do you pronounce g before e? well, you know that just as well as I do, you blockhead,” etc. All that the boy thinks about, whenever he gets an opportunity, is, what in the world can be the meaning of that word I am coming to. Then he translates, interrupted by the teacher’s corrections, or “look out,” “where is the verb,” “but what case is it,” etc. Then there are, perhaps, some grammatical questions,

he is to give the principal parts of a verb or two, explain the use of a subjunctive, etc. ; the questions are not asked in the foreign language and are not to be answered in that tongue. The next boy is called upon to recite in the same way, and so on until the lesson has been gone through ; if there is time enough, perhaps we go through it once more, but that must be in a hurry, so we do not stop to read it first this time. The last five or six minutes are devoted to looking through the lesson for next time ; the teacher translates it while the pupils follow it in their books, and perhaps exert themselves to write down the meaning of some difficult word in the margin of the reader or in a note-book.

The most prominent feature of the teaching is haste ; there is much to be done, especially as examination draws on. It seems to be an established custom that the examination marks are determined by the quality of the translation, and it is in order to get practice in translating that the reading selections are gone through as many times as possible. There is not much time for reading aloud ; why, when one has only learned the main principles of pronunciation, one can generally infer the pronunciation of any word from the spelling, especially in German, but also in French. I suppose it is more or less in this confidence that the teachers let a piece be translated three or four times for every time it is read aloud in the original.

How much of the foreign language does the pupil hear in the course of such a lesson ? The teacher says a word now and then—for instance, when a pupil translates incorrectly ; but then the attention is not directed to the pronunciation ; besides, it is generally only one word that

he says, and that word occurs most likely in a sentence in the pupils' own language. Now, it is a matter of fact that even one who pronounces very well cannot get the proper French swing of a French word when it occurs in company with words of another language. The basis of articulation is different in the two languages, and it is not easy to shift from the one to the other in a moment. So it is but little that the pupil hears from his teacher. From his classmates he hears a little more, no doubt; but theirs is not exactly exemplary pronunciation, and besides, it does not interest him to pay attention to it. If he only can manage to keep the place in the book where the others are for the moment, he can very well think about other things while the others are reciting; he can, for instance, review the difficult words in the next piece, if he does not prefer to dream about his stamp collection or his bicycle. Finally, on rare occasions, he is permitted to read a couple of lines aloud in class, but it is considered merely as a sort of introduction to the main business in hand, translation. He never gets an opportunity to say anything himself in the foreign language outside of what stands in the book, and he very seldom hears others say anything that he is not following in print.

So it is no wonder that such instruction scarcely cultivates at all the pupil's ability to understand a foreign language as it is rapidly and naturally spoken by a native. If he should hear the simplest every-day sentence in a foreign language, correctly and naturally pronounced, and he should be asked merely to repeat it, he would in nine cases out of ten betray the strangest perplexity, although

he would have had no trouble whatever with a far more difficult piece which he happened to meet with in print.

But that is not all ; this method has other disadvantages. The foreign words gallop past the pupil's eye ; his main object is to be able to recognize them in a vague sort of way so that they may give him the clue to the translation. Oftentimes one word thus vaguely remembered even gives him the clue to the translation of a whole sentence which he knows by heart because there was something special about it. What he gets hold of is the translation, and the whole translation often comes to his mind when he has only looked at the beginning of the sentence in the original—sometimes, however, only on condition that it stands in the same place on the page (at the top to the left, etc.), where he is used to seeing it. There is not the same inducement to remember the forms of the foreign expressions exactly. If you take a clever boy who has been taught according to the usual method and, after he has translated a little piece of his lesson, close his book and ask him to give the original of the last sentence which he has translated, it will in many cases be impossible for him to do it. I reported an example of this at the congress in Stockholm in 1886 ; a clever pupil was translating a piece of Mérimée's *Colomba* at sight, and was doing it very well, when I made the experiment. He apparently remembered the sentence well enough in the translation, but it was slowly and with difficulty that he ventured the French : *Et il pleurait comme le fils de Pietri pleurait.* But in the book there stood : *Et il pleura comme pleurait le fils de Pietri.* It is clear that it is impossible for a pupil

to get a correct conception of the radical difference between passé défini and imparfait, or of the effect of the order of words, when he pays so little attention to the French forms that he meets with. One can never get any real appreciation of the idiosyncrasies of a foreign language as long as the translation is the main object.

Let us consider for a moment the workings of a boy's mind when it is his turn to recite and he has to translate such a sentence as, for instance: *cet homme, dont elle ne voyait jamais les enfants.* *Cet*, this, *homme*, man, *dont*, whose — now he discovers that it will not be English if he continues to take one word after the other in the French order, so he looks ahead, tries every word hurriedly ; finally he finds *les enfants*, the children ; no, I forgot, we must not have the article there in English, so merely children ; back to *elle*, she ; now he sees that *ne jamais* must be taken first. never ; *voyait*, saw. So instead of taking the French words in the natural order, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, he has to skip backwards and forwards in order to get them in the order 1, 2, 3, (8), 9, 4, 5, 7, 6. In an English text-book for German schools the following sentence<sup>1</sup> is given for translation with numbers indicating the order in which the words are to be taken in English : <sup>1</sup>Würden <sup>2</sup>Sie <sup>3</sup>nicht <sup>6</sup>viel <sup>7</sup>zeit <sup>5</sup>gehabt <sup>4</sup>haben <sup>8</sup>wenn <sup>9</sup>Sie <sup>11</sup>nicht <sup>15</sup>jenen <sup>16</sup>brief <sup>13</sup>zu <sup>14</sup>schreiben <sup>12</sup>gehabt <sup>10</sup>hätten. In other cases, it is the pupils themselves who by means of numbers and letters ("paving letters") smooth the difficulty of translation. Anyone who is accustomed to translate German at sight knows

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Englische Studien* VIII., 175.

how when he has translated the subject of a dependent clause he silently runs through what follows, often several lines, in order to find the verb, which according to English usage must not be too far separated from its subject, and how in hastily trying each single word his attention is drawn to a number of subordinate thoughts while the main thought stands and waits, as it were. This mental process is made even more complicated by the fact that only in a minority of cases does every word in a sentence (like the simple sentence given above) in any way correspond to an English word ; as a rule the translator also has to think about such questions as, does *sick* here mean him, or her, or himself, or herself, or itself, or oneself ; does *si* mean so, or as, or if ; is *il fait* to be taken as he does, he makes, he has (something done), or it does, or it is, or in still another way, etc., etc. This mental process, which is much more complicated than would generally be supposed, is far beyond the ability of the children. Therefore they often remain contented with the text-book's, the teacher's or the parent's translation, which is learned partly or entirely by heart ; otherwise the translation is apt to swarm with the well-known offences against the mother-tongue, word-formation, phrases, expressions, order of words, etc., which are not English. Since the teacher of course cannot put up with this murdering of the King's English, a large part of every lesson in the foreign language has to be spent in the troublesome task of rooting out these barbarisms.

That is why it is so often said that instruction in foreign languages always is, or ought to be, at the same time

instruction in one's native language, or, as the matter is sometimes more pointedly put, that the main object in learning other languages is to get a correct knowledge of one's own. Of course there is much truth in this last statement, if it is the theoretical understanding of languages that we are thinking about; for it is only natural that we cannot appreciate the richness of our mother-tongue, or have any opinion about its structural advantages or disadvantages, or even give a correct description of its structure or understand its historical development, when we have no other languages to compare it with.<sup>1</sup> Yet all this ought not to close our eyes to the fact that as soon as it is a question of the practical command of the mother-tongue, the assertion is utterly false. In this respect instruction in foreign languages does not help us, and it is not the people who are most accomplished in other languages who are the best stylists in their own. On the contrary! Only compare the language used by the same pupil in his English essays and in his translations from the Latin; in the latter, you will find a number of offences against good English usage which could not possibly have occurred in the former. So the errors are in reality not due to a deficient command of the mother-tongue, but solely and alone to the restraining and confusing influence brought to bear upon the pupil's thoughts by the foreign forms of expression; the strange language lures him in upon linguistic paths where he would never set his foot

<sup>1</sup> Wer fremde sprachen nicht kennt, weiss nichts von seiner eignen.

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otherwise, and which only lead him into a mire. It is the school with its translation-method that has sown the dragon's teeth, and it must now reap the consequences. Instruction in foreign languages, according to the prevailing method, is so far from being a help to the pupils in their treatment of English, that, on the contrary, in spite of all the energy which is put in on combating Germanisms, Latinisms, etc., in the translations, it often makes them uncertain and vacillating in their feeling for what is good English.<sup>1</sup>

The acquirement of a certain intuition for good usage in a *foreign* language had best be left out of the discussion here; a really thorough knowledge of French or German habits of expression is, of course, not to be obtained as long as we are unable to see anything in these languages without straightway turning all our attention to something quite different, namely, the English rendering.<sup>2</sup> We get no further than to a "nodding acquaintance" with the component parts of the foreign language, so that we know them pretty well by sight and can repeat their names, but we do not become quite intimate with them, we do not

<sup>1</sup> Ch. Darwin had the strongest disbelief in the common idea that a classical scholar must write good English; indeed he thought that the contrary was the case. (*Life and Letters*, i. 155.) See also the strong expressions to the same effect in H. Spencer's *Facts and Comments*, 1902, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Der geist des schülers muss eine ganz wunderliche turnerei treiben, immer hin- und herhüpfen zwischen den beiden sprachen, in keiner recht zur ruhe kommen. Das mag eine treffliche übung sein zu mancherlei anderen verstandesleistungen (? O. J.), nur gerade für die spracherlernung ist der gewinn zweifelhaft.—G. v. d. Gabelentz, *Die Sprachwissenschaft*, 1891, 73.

live together with them, they do not become flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood. If something difficult is to be learned, the very first essential is to be much occupied with it; therefore the first condition for good instruction in foreign languages would seem to be to give the pupil as much as possible to do with and in the foreign language; he must be steeped in it, not only get a sprinkling of it now and then; he must be ducked down in it and get to feel as if he were in his own element, so that he may at last disport himself in it as an able swimmer. But what is most characteristic for the prevailing methods is that the translation with its accessories swallows up so much time, that there is none left for this free disporting in the foreign element.

Then why does translation play such an important part? We must first find an answer to this question before we proceed to ask if it can and ought to be thrust into the background, and by what means. Now the ability to translate may either be considered the end of instruction in foreign languages, or translation may be regarded merely as a means of instruction (one of several means or perhaps the only means).

Now is it right to say that the *purpose* of instruction in a foreign language is that the pupils may learn to *translate* fluently and exactly (from and into the language)? The answer must be an emphatic No. The popular opinion among those who have not thought the matter over, or who have not given sufficiently careful attention to their own mental processes, is that a foreign language can be understood only by transposing it into one's mother-tongue; but

this is not so. Those who read foreign authors in the original with real advantage do not actually first translate each word, still less each sentence or each period, into English before they proceed further. Those who are listening to a French lecture or seeing a play in Paris have no time to translate to themselves, but it is not necessary for them to do it either. And finally, it goes without saying that the Englishman who really speaks French and German well does not first construct his sentences in English and then translate them in the same way as a schoolboy translates his exercises. No; in all these mental processes, English occupies a place in the background and is just as superfluous as for instance German is for me while I am reading or talking French. How often are we not asked the meaning of some foreign word or expression which we know very well and would neither pay any special attention to in a book nor hesitate to use in conversation but yet we cannot give any English equivalent for it without resorting to some vague uncertain circumlocution; then suddenly, after a good deal of speculation, we hit upon the correct English expression. Or the questioner may suggest first one and then another translation of something French or Latin; we do not feel satisfied, but cannot mention anything better; then he attempts a new suggestion and instantly it flashes upon us that this is the best. In all these cases, then, we have clearly and distinctly understood the foreign expressions without being able to translate them (or before we could translate them). Of course the German word *fall* is only one and the same word for me whether it be used in such a manner as to be best rendered by English

case, *instance*, or by *fall*, *decline*, *descent*, or in still another way (*unglückfall*, accident; *schlimmsten falles*, if the worst come to the worst; *auf keinen fall*, on no account, etc.). When I come across the word *gegen*, I do not consciously stop to decide if it "means" *towards*, *to*, *about* or *against*; nor in the case of *bleiben*, if it is to be rendered by *remain*, *stay*, *stop*, *continue*, *keep*, or *survive*. *Il a dû se taire*; *elle a le cœur serré*; *il traite le sujet avec la compétence qu'on lui connaît*—should I really have to hunt for the proper translation every time such an idiom occurs? Should I stop at every perspicuous German compound until I had found the cumbersome English circumlocution that is often needed to render it? No; in all of these cases, I directly and spontaneously connect the idea with the language in which it is expressed without going any round-about way through the words of my native language. Any one who introduces a foreign word into his English either because there is no exact equivalent in English or, at least, because he cannot recall it for the moment, also thereby shows that people really can, and very frequently do, learn words in other languages without getting at their meaning through their mother-tongue.

"Il trouva la pauvre fille dans un état à faire pitié." "On a voulu trouver dans ses œuvres un pessimisme de parti pris." "Pour lui, il y allait de la gloire de cette maison qu'il servait depuis sa jeunesse." How many a man will understand without difficulty such sentences as these and a hundred others, and yet hesitate at once when asked to translate them! We must on the whole make a distinction between the ability to feel at home in a language and skill

in translating from or into it; even if these two accomplishments may be found in one and the same person, yet they are not seldom to be seen separated. If I may be allowed to talk about myself, I may say that my ability to translate quickly and well is so decidedly inferior to my ability to understand and to express my thoughts in those languages which I have studied, that I should scarcely like to have my linguistic attainments judged by my skill in translation.

The lately deceased art-critic, P. G. Hamerton, the author of that interesting book *French and English*, says about himself: "As my wife was a Parisian with a strong taste for the classical literature of her own country, I became her pupil in French and she became mine in English. We made it a rule in our private conversation never to allow a fault in either language to pass uncorrected, and we read aloud to each other a great deal. . . . In the use of languages I have one faculty which seems to be rather uncommon: that of keeping them entirely separated. When speaking or writing French I am, for the time being, like one totally ignorant of English, as English words do not occur to me, and I never translate anything, not even weights and measures, or money, or the thermometer, from one language to the other, but think in each, independently."

When Hamerton here says that this ability is unusual, he no doubt means that it is unusual in so high a degree as he had it. Perhaps it is not all people who get so far that *dix-huit degrés*, for instance, awakens in them just as precise a conception as the corresponding degrees

of heat in terms of Fahrenheit ; and yet, no doubt, by habit, this too will become quite natural for those who care very much to have the temperature expressed in degrees. It is just like the foreigner in France who, after a very short time, involuntarily begins to calculate with French money, so that he does not have to transpose *deux francs cinquante* into English shillings and pence before he can judge as to whether the price of an article is high or low.

Though I may admit, however, that this ability to feel at home in a strange language is not altogether common in so high a degree, yet I think it may be said that the same ability only in a less degree is not unusual. I mean that it is rather the exception than the rule for people who read foreign books to any extent at all to have to translate to themselves in order to understand what they are reading, with the exception, perhaps, of some difficult lines here and there. And even in the difficult places, where they have to resort to their mother-tongue in order to understand the meaning, it is generally only one or two words which have to be looked up, so they generally do not even pause to translate the whole clause in which those words have occurred ; still less frequently do they stop merely to untangle some involved sentence construction. When a whole population has to make constant use of two languages, the circumstances are no doubt always the same as among the Wends in Lusatia : "They speak both Wendish and German with equal fluency ; yet the common people generally refuse when they are asked to translate something from one language to another : 'he cannot do it,' or, as one of my informants expressed himself, he is

afraid to.' He can, however, without difficulty repeat in German a tale which he has heard in Wendish, and *vice versa*, and likewise he can give the exact translation of single words."<sup>1</sup>

While there are countless persons who have use for the ability to understand a foreign language directly, and while there is at all events a constantly increasing number of people who need to express their thoughts in a foreign language, there are really very few who will ever have any occasion to exercise skill in translation. There are many who write private letters in German, etc., but they do not compose an English text first which they then proceed to translate with exactness. Even those who have foreign business letters to write for someone else are not generally given every word that is to stand in them, but merely a rough draft of the contents, which they are to clothe in a foreign language as best they can. There remain, then, the few translators connected with the law-courts, the providers of translated novels, and finally the very small number of choice spirits who have the courage to grapple with the valuable and charming art of transplanting poetry in a poetical rendering. But they may all find comfort in the fact that skill in translation at the very bottom rests on that same direct command of language that we all need,<sup>2</sup> so

<sup>1</sup> F. Polle, *Wie denkt das volk über die sprache.* Leipzig, 1889, p. 35. The languages are as different from each other as English and Russian.

<sup>2</sup> Only by understanding the connexion in which they occur is it possible to know what is meant by English *light*, or *bow*, French *montre* or *fin*, German *thor* or *lieben*. So the language must be understood before it can be translated.

there is no need for them to feel dissatisfied if we refuse to recognize skill in translation as the end and aim of all instruction in languages.

Our ideal must rather be the nearest possible approach to the native's command of the language, so that the words and sentences may awaken the same ideas in us as in the native—and these ideas, as we well know, are not the same as those called forth by the corresponding words in our own language. The relations between languages are not like the relations between mathematical equivalents ; *cœur*, *herz*, *heart* do not all cover the same ground, to say nothing of the difference between *sens*, *sinn*, *sense*, etc. Even when the literal meaning may be said to be the same, the suggestions associated with the words vary in the different languages, suggestions arising from related words, from words that are similar in sound or similar in some other way, from frequent combinations in which the words occur, etc. The same animal is in English called *bat*, in French *chauvesouris*, in German *fledermaus*, in Latin *vespertilio*, in Danish *flagermus*, but what a difference in the suggestions ! The French, the German and the Danish words call attention to the animal's resemblance to a mouse, the Danish word besides to its flapping movement (a suggestion which must be lost for the Germans since *flattern* has taken the place of *fledern*), but the French word to its bald appearance ; the Latin word makes us think of the time of day when the animal is abroad, but the English word *bat* is rather an abstract expression without any suggestiveness, and we can understand why Tennyson declared that the provincial word *fittermouse*

was far more suitable for poetical use than *bat*. These "undertones" of the words sound more distinctly in puns, rhymes, etc., but still they always lie lurking in the background of our conscience. It is all such things as these, together with the fact that some languages carefully distinguish between certain shades of grammar or meaning which are of no consequence in other languages, where the finesses seem to be extended to totally different points, and furthermore together with different habits as to order of words, etc., etc., which, taken all in all, make it impossible for any translation ever to be a perfect reproduction of the original : *traduttore traditore!*

For all these reasons, it is not translation (or skill in translation) that we are aiming at in teaching foreign languages.

## V

BUT for all that translation might still be a useful and indispensable *means* in the service of language instruction. In order to judge of this we must have a clear conception of the different ways in which translation can be and really is used :

- (a)—Translation *into English* is a means of getting the pupil to understand the foreign language, as for instance, when I tell him that *cheval* means "horse," or when I translate a whole sentence for him ;
- (b)—Translation into English is a means of testing whether the pupil understands, as, for instance, when I ask him what *cheval* means in English, or when I let him translate a whole sentence ;
- (c)—Translation *from English* is a means of giving the pupil practice in producing something in the foreign language ;
- (d)—Translation from English is a means of testing whether the pupil can express himself in the foreign language. It is really a subdivision of this when the teacher lets a pupil translate an English sentence in order to see if he understands some grammatical rule in the foreign language.

It is clear that *a* and *b* are right closely connected, likewise *c* and *d*; yet it will be seen later that the one does not necessarily presuppose the other, as is no doubt generally assumed.

Advocates of the routine-method will throw *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d* together indiscriminately and say about them all that translation is an excellent and indeed the only practical means.

But their opponents, now, maintain that in none of these four cases is translation the only means—very far from it!—and that besides it is not equally valuable in all instances.

(*a*)—There is always danger in translation; but in spite of this there are many who in certain cases will use this means as being the surest and quickest way of getting the pupils to understand, but in other cases will try to do without it; some teachers even think that in all cases they can find other and better means of getting the pupils to comprehend the meaning of foreign expressions.

(*b*)—As a means of testing whether the pupil understands the foreign language, it is a tolerably good thing to let him translate, but only tolerably good; it is not always reliable, and ought in many cases to be a last resort.

(*c*)—Translation from English is, for beginners at least, an extremely poor means in comparison with the many other hitherto generally neglected ways in which the teacher may get a pupil to say (or write) something in the foreign language.

“Das übersetzen in die fremdsprache zum zwecke der erlernung derselben gehört einfach in das gebiet pädagogischer sünden und verirrungen” (Bierbaum, *Die neueren sprachen*, i. 57).

(d)—As a test of whether the pupil can express himself in the other language, an oral or written exercise in translation is either illusory or is at least suitable only for the most advanced pupils.

These assertions must now be made good, especially by the suggestion of other means which may be substituted for translation. I shall not continue strictly to observe the distinctions between the four categories, *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*. In order to avoid tedious repetitions of expressions like “the foreign language in question,” I shall in the following pages say in short “the language” in contrast to English.

Are there other means by which I can get the pupil to comprehend the meaning of foreign words and sentences? Yes; in the first place by means of *direct observation* or immediate perception (what the Germans call *anschauung*). This applies to substantives which designate objects, etc., to be found in the school-room: fenêtre, porte, banc, chaise, tableau (noir), craie, livre, plume, crayon, montre, élève, maître (professeur), etc. All that is necessary is to point to the objects with such remarks as *c'est* (or *voilà*) *la craie*, *on appelle ça le tableau noir*, etc., and the pupil cannot mistake the meaning of each word. Furthermore, this is the best way to teach the most necessary words relating to the human body: tête, cheveux, nez, yeux, bouche, lèvres, barbe, joue, oreille, bras, main, doigt, etc. But in addition to the many substantives there are also a number of words

of other classes which can be learned in this manner: voilà une fenêtre, et voilà une *autre* fenêtre; Pierre est un élève, Paul est un autre élève; words like *ici*, *là*; especially a number of verbs of action: *j'écris*; Victor écrit. je *prends* la craie; Jean prend la craie. je me *lève*; Pierre se lève. *je m'assieds*, je *marche* (vers la porte), *j'ouvre* la porte, *je ferme* la porte; je *donne* le livre à Pierre, Pierre me *donne* le livre, etc. At the same time as the teacher or the pupil says something or other, the teacher illustrates the action. In that manner, already in the first stage, before the pupils have any French vocabulary to operate with, a number of words and sentences may be learned without the use of a single English word. Yes, even the various tenses of the verbs can be explained by this method. If, for instance, in the course of their reading, the pupils come across *il a pris* and they do not understand it, the teacher can show what it means—this of course does not apply to the very first lessons—by first taking the chalk and saying: je prends la craie, then a book: je prends le livre de Jean, then his hand: je prends sa main, and then saying: d'abord j'ai pris la craie, puis j'ai pris le livre de Jean, et enfin j'ai pris sa main. With a little ingenuity a good deal can be brought in in this way; some material in French has been well arranged in P. Passy and T. Tostrup, *Leçons de choses*. I shall later come to the question as to whether and how the pupils are to repeat what the teacher says in this way, as likewise to the objection that the pupils in reality understand these words in English. Here I shall merely caution against taking too much material of this kind at a stretch; it is best to intersperse it with other things.

In the second place, the meaning of the words may be communicated through *mediate perception*, through pictures. This is what Miss Goldschmidt with so much energy has put into practice in her "picture-words" and in other books on the same plan, which have been edited partly by her and partly by others. Each page contains a collection of pictures representing a series of objects belonging to the same sphere of ideas. Sometimes they are joined together to make a whole scene; sometimes the objects remain separated, without being brought into connection with each other; some of the pictures are well put together; others present several curiosities, as, for instance, a telescope freely hovering in a rainbow. Each object is supplied with a number referring to lists where the corresponding French (English, etc.) words are given. In many German schools, and in several places in Denmark now too, large picture-charts are used to hang upon the schoolroom wall, especially the Hölzel charts, where, for instance, on a winter-picture are collected representations of the most important things belonging to winter. Then the teacher can point to one of these things and at the same time explain it in the language which is being studied. Finally pictures can also be used to illustrate a narrative or descriptive text, as in the English primers published by Sarauw and myself.

There have been several objections raised against the perception-method. Thus Sweet says that the idea is not so sharply defined as in the case of translation. If we see *chapeau* by the side of (the picture of) a silk hat, we do not know if it merely designates that kind of hat or other kinds too, so that the translation "hat" is more apt to suggest

the correct idea. Or if the teacher points to his mouth and says *bouche*, the pupils might just as well think that it means lip, etc. The objection comes from a closet philosopher, who has not seen the thing in practice; there is almost no danger except for one who would try to learn a language by himself and exclusively through pictures. In oral instruction, such mistakes are scarcely frequent enough to be worth mentioning, even if it might be a good thing perhaps for teachers to realize that they are possible—they even occur now and then in a child's apprehension of his native language, which in large part follows exactly these same paths. If the teacher understands his business, no mistake at all occurs or else it is soon corrected, for of course he will never stop at merely pointing to the object and giving the word, but he will immediately use it in sentences and connections in which the meaning becomes perfectly clear; for instance, if he only says *tu as une bouche et deux lèvres*, or, after having pointed to his mouth and said *bouche*, he asks one of the boys: *Combien as-tu de bouches?* there will be no danger of such mistakes; indeed all danger is generally precluded from the very beginning, for when the teacher points to his mouth, he is not apt to say merely *bouche*, but *voilà la bouche* or *voilà ma bouche*, where the singular form *la*, *ma* unmistakably indicates the correct meaning. Such misunderstandings as in the case of *chapeau* are no doubt of rare occurrence, but at all events, the teacher may prevent them too by talking about his own and the pupils' hats with the use of the same word.

Another opponent of the perception-method has said that it causes disturbance in the class when the teachers in

modern languages now get up, now sit down, open the door, close the door, blow their noses, pull their boots off and on (?) etc.

A third opponent carefully depicts all the asides a pupil will think of when the teacher, in order to teach him the word *gants*, pulls his gloves out of his pocket: "They are pretty bad specimens," or "Oho! he has brought his best ones along to-day because he knew he was going to use them," etc. Of course the method can be driven to caricature, and of course the discipline can become lax if the teacher goes through the various actions with too much restlessness, but in general the method does not require very different or more disturbing movements than those which take place in every or every other lesson: a pupil goes to the blackboard or the door or opens a window. And if there is any spirit in the teaching, the pupils indulge in no more irrelevant asides than in other lessons.

There seems to be greater weight in the objection that only apparently is the foreign word directly attached to the idea by means of the perception-method, since either a real hat or a picture of one immediately suggests to the pupil the English word *hat*, so that after all we do not avoid the roundabout way through the native language, as we desire; the hobgoblin moves with us. Well, if we think it is possible entirely to prevent English words from turning up in the children's consciousness, we certainly deceive ourselves. But if we are more modest in our demands and simply want the foreign language to be kept as much as possible in the foreground and English in the background, then it cannot be denied that it must make

for this end when it is not necessary for either the teacher or the pupil to mention the English word. And the more they both become accustomed to this method of teaching, the more previously learned words there are for the new ones to be associated with, and the more ingenious the teacher is to vary the whole, the more seldom do the English words occur to the pupil.

With the pictures as a basis of suggestion, there can and ought to be conducted talks in the language, at least after the very first lessons are past. It is but seldom necessary to resort to the native language, and the time is almost exclusively occupied in hearing and saying something in the language. But this can best be done when the pictures not only suggest single words but are rich in content. Thus Mrs. Freudenthal, in Finland, has to a large extent in her teaching used reproductions of genre paintings, which give occasion for spinning out whole narratives suggested by the pictures. Perhaps it is still better, as Sarauw and I have done in our book for beginners in English, to supply the tales (or other selections) with little illustrations ; they may occasion conversations which have more or less to do with the text and which can be conducted with essentially the same vocabulary ; and the teacher ought also to return now and then to previously discussed pictures, which may be treated more fully than before on account of the progress made by the pupils in the meanwhile.

Pictures, then, are of undoubted significance in the teaching of languages, even if their scope must not be overrated and they must not be used as the only means

of explanation—all one-sidedness is hurtful. But the pictures ought to be characteristic of the foreign land and people, especially when they are to be used beyond the beginner stage. I am not the first one to reproach Miss Goldschmidt because she gives pictures showing, for instance, a Danish sitting-room, a Danish postman, etc., and lets the pupils use the same pictures in learning all three foreign languages, something which is not exactly calculated to win interest but must be pretty monotonous, whereas exactly what should be done is to open the pupil's eyes to the manifold and characteristic differences existing between the various nations. Schools ought to be well supplied with pictures on the walls and illustrated works which may serve to give the pupils some enlightenment about French and German conditions of life, natural scenery, buildings, art, institutions. Foreign illustrated papers will be found to contain much useful material, and the teacher ought frequently to use 5-10 minutes or more of the lesson to discuss such a picture in the language with the pupils. That would be an excellent way in which to supplement the teaching based on the text-book.

But not only such ready-made pictures may be used in teaching languages. The teacher can often, by means of rough chalk-drawings on the blackboard, illustrate various things in the text which is being read and base his explanations (in the language) on them. The few times I have done it, the pupils immediately took to it, so that I began to deplore my great lack of skill in drawing. If there was any subject that was neglected when I went to school, it was drawing. Now people

have, fortunately, begun to get their eyes open to the importance of this branch, first and foremost for teachers of all subjects as a help in their teaching, and, secondly, for the pupils as the good thing it is from an educational point of view for them to learn to see an object correctly and to reproduce what they see in a drawing. And just as in the case of natural history and geography, the drawings of the pupils now are an important feature of the instruction, so they might play a similar part in the teaching of languages. It is a splendid idea that has been put into practice in "Det danske selskabs skole." I shall quote from its "Beretning," 1900:

"Exercises in drawing have also played an important part. Before the lesson begins there is written on the blackboard one subject for each pupil to illustrate by a drawing. Each one has a certain amount of space apportioned to him. The pupil is ordered to draw only such things as he can mention and explain in German. But of course the intention is that much more is to be drawn. For instance, if the subject is a wagon, the pupil naturally draws both wheels, wagon-pole, stud-stave, side pieces, seat, driver with whip, horses, harness, etc. The pupil has to explain his drawing to the class, and of course he gets into a tight place; the result is that his interest is aroused for what all the things are called, and he pays close attention to the words when the teacher says them. Fourteen boys in a class can finish their drawings in 10 minutes, and it takes 30 minutes to go through the 14 drawings." (C. Lambek.)

Here it looks as if the subject were given in Danish;

and perhaps the words learned in the exercise have been taken up too much in detail. I should think it might be still better to announce the subject orally and rather fully in the language, to say, for instance, to a Danish pupil who is learning English—You draw a picture of a two-storied house with three windows in each story and one door; outside the house a man is to stand smoking his pipe; or, you draw a carriage and pair, inside the carriage is a gentleman, but you see only the tip of his nose; a dog is running fast behind the carriage. If there is—as there always ought to be—blackboard space enough for several pupils to execute their drawings at the same time, so much the better; the rest of the class can be occupied with something else until the drawings are finished; then they are first explained by the drawer, thereupon by one or several of the other pupils; of course both the teacher and the pupils call attention to anything that has been forgotten in the drawing, and new points are brought up, as suggested by Mr. Lambek. Also in connection with little stories, the pupils may be asked to make drawings to show that they have understood what they have been reading. In speaking about the use of pictures, I have wandered a little from my point of departure, namely, the ways in which (aside from translation) the pupil may be taught the meaning of a foreign word.

All of us who are further advanced must confess to ourselves that in reading foreign books we have often omitted to look up an unfamiliar word in the dictionary, because its meaning was perfectly clear from the *context*. And we have all learned thousands of words in our mother-tongue

in the same way. Then why not use this experience in the teaching of foreign languages? Because it leads to guess-work, to carelessness in studying, to an approximate and uncertain comprehension, is the answer we get. Granted —as far as some cases are concerned! There are many combinations where the meaning of a word may be "sensed" through the context, and where a conscientious teacher cannot remain satisfied without some proof that the pupil really understands the word; and there are cases where the teacher imagines that the pupils cannot help seeing the meaning immediately, and yet their guesses are all wrong. But still the ability to arrive at the meaning of an unfamiliar word through the text is valuable and does not deserve to be neglected, but should, on the contrary, be cultivated—under control, of course. At all events, there can be no danger in using really self-interpreting sentences where the meaning of an unfamiliar word may be assumed with unfailing certainty and without guess-work. In a sentence like "*Il y a douze mois dans l'année*," the pupil who is acquainted with any two of the three italicized words will be able to reason out the meaning of the third with as great accuracy as in the equation  $a + b = c$  the unknown quantity may be found when the two are given. And if you continue: *le premier s'appelle janvier, le second s'appelle février, le troisième s'appelle mars, etc.*, then it is no guesswork at all if the pupils gather both the ordinal numerals and the names of the months. The same may be said of the following sentences—

*Le jour se divise en vingt-quatre heures ; l'heure se divise en soixante minutes, et la minute en soixante secondes.*

Soixante secondes font une minute ; soixante minutes font une heure ; vingt-quatre heures font un jour ; sept jours font une semaine ; cinquante-deux semaines et quelques jours font une année ; cent années font un siècle.

Here the pupil can infer the meaning of a number of words without needing the teacher's translation. So it is only a waste of time to let the pupil himself translate such pieces—for he can do that half-asleep without looking very much at the French, and he does not learn much that way. No ; let him repeat them in French until he can say them fluently, then let him isolate the ordinals : le premier, le second . . . , thereupon the names of the months : janvier, février . . . ; thereupon go through both series backwards, and then finally answer questions at random : Comment s'appelle le troisième mois ? Quel est le dixième mois ? etc. Or in connexion with the second selection, let him go through all the divisions of time, first beginning with the smallest and then with the largest (with the use of the article *un*, *une*) ; then ask : Comment se divise l'heure ? Comment se divise le jour ? Combien de secondes a une minute ? Trois heures, combien de minutes ? Deux années, combien de mois ? etc., etc. In this way it seems as if a teacher can with complete confidence continue for a long time to keep even those pupils occupied who do not know much French, without needing to mention a single English word.<sup>1</sup>

Now of course there are only few subjects which can thus be talked about in one self-interpreting sentence after

<sup>1</sup> See below about exercises in counting.

the other: Sweet has, in his Elementarbuch, got hold of more of that sort of thing than any other author of similar text-books that I know of; but almost any text will be found to contain sentences where the general sense unmistakably indicates the meaning of the new words; the more of that kind of combinations the pupil commits to memory the better for him. The ability to infer the meaning from the context ought rather to be encouraged and practised than ought the tendency to go by resemblances to words in the mother-tongue or in other languages; even if much may be learned in this way (Eng. *send*, German *senden*; Eng. *ruin*, Ger. French *ruine*, etc.), yet there is still reason to caution against too much confidence in resemblances, for they often lead us astray (even in the case of "etymologically identical words"). Most of the really valuable associations of this kind come of their own accord.

But to continue, the new words may simply be explained in the language to the pupil—this of course really means that the teacher puts the word into a self-interpreting sentence, so it is merely a subdivision of what we have just been speaking about. Anyone who has been accustomed to use the excellent French and English dictionaries, large or small, all the way from Littré and Murray to the little Larousse or Annandale's Concise, knows how often he has been able to find in them quite sufficient explanations of unfamiliar words. Why not use this experience too in the teaching of foreign languages? Thus, for instance, explain *veuf*: *Un veuf est un homme dont la femme est morte*; *une veuve est une femme dont le mari est mort*. This

explanation, to be sure, contains no more information than is to be got out of the simple translation "widower" ("widow"); but there are cases where an explanation gives better information than a translation. It is not improbable that many Englishmen, when given the translation *primage* or *hat-money* for German *kappelaken*, will remain just as wise as they were before, but they will immediately understand it if it is explained in German: *prämiengeld*, das früher dem schiffskapitän ausser der fracht gezahlt wurde, ursprünglich freiwilliges geschenk, dann vertragsmässig bestimmt. The English word *dentil* is in English-German dictionaries translated by *kälberzahn*, but I suppose that most Germans would get more out of Annandale's definition: "the name of the little cubes or square blocks often cut for ornament on Greek cornices," or Funk-Wagnalls' definition: "One of a series of small square tooth-like ornamental blocks in the bed-moulding of the cornices of some Ionic and other entablatures" (here even an instructive illustration). Well, such technical words, where we do not even know the English term, we shall scarcely have much use for in school; but sometimes on account of the chance vagaries of language a translation does not give as exact an idea as an explanation. If I say that *stockwerk* means *floor*, I run the risk of getting an exercise with *stockwerk* used where there ought to be *fussboden*; but if I explain it as "eine der horizontalen einteilungen eines hauses," or something like that, there is no danger of any misunderstanding.

On the other hand, it must of course be admitted that there are many words where an English translation gives

the information required more quickly and more clearly than it could be given in a long explanation in the foreign language; and the teacher ought to consider in each separate case which of the two ways of helping the pupil is to be preferred. Still he must not let laziness influence him to give the translation, which of course is always easiest for him, but he must remember that an explanation in the language always has the great advantage that the pupil, in addition to the new words, hears a number of others which he thereby reviews, as it were, and that the pupil is for the time being wholly occupied with the foreign language. Besides, these explanations amuse the pupils because they get more intellectual work out of them than out of translations, which are given to them gratis.

However, such explanations ought perhaps not to be used to any great extent in the glossaries of text-books, especially in readers for beginners; here it is best to weave them into the text itself. In the first place, in such glossaries or notes, the explanations naturally become drier and more like definitions than is necessary; in the second place, the pupil who does not feel inclined to read those few lines through is tempted to get some comrade, a parent, or a sister to tell him in short the meaning of the word: that is, to translate it. To counteract this by *always* requiring the pupil to commit the given explanation to memory is not exactly a wise plan, since it may easily lead to mere thoughtless memory-work. For the glossary ought to play no more important part in really good teaching for beginners than as a help to the forgetful pupil in his home-preparation, where he can look up the meaning (and pro-

nunciation) of a word which he cannot remember, I do not hesitate to use translation there.<sup>1</sup>

The explanations in the foreign language are especially in place when the teacher assigns the lesson and goes through it orally. This must be done with the greatest care and with a view to giving the pupils a really full and all round insight into the new selection to be read—with as much life and as few English words and sentences as possible. Much depends upon the way in which the teacher reads the piece ; many pieces can be read in such a way that the pupils cannot help understanding them : for instance, by the use of stress, emphasis of contrasts, change of voice, etc. And then he can point to various things by way of illustration—and it does no harm to point at the window, for instance, on coming across the word *fenêtre*, even if the class has had that word before. Many words can be made clear by means of gestures, etc. ; *scie*, for instance, can be illustrated by a sawing movement accompanied by a wheezing sound; for *tailler*, it is only necessary to cut for half a second with an imaginary knife ; thus the meaning of *boire*, *chanter*, *coup de pied*, *grimper*, *joyeux*, *mécontent*, *pleurer*, *dormir*, *taper*, and many other words can be given ; as a rule, merely little (not noisy !)

<sup>1</sup> It is quite a different matter if the (literary) texts which more advanced students can read are to a large extent annotated in the language itself. But the annotated editions prepared for native students in many cases assume too much for our pupils, and on the other hand are apt to give a good deal of information which is not so valuable for them ; so it were best as soon as possible to prepare editions of works of foreign literature with commentaries in the language, which especially meet the requirements of our pupils.

suggestions are necessary for the class to understand immediately.

Finally there are circumlocutions in the language, not straightforward definitions as in the dictionaries, but also other explanations; often it is only necessary to lead the thoughts of the pupils in upon the right track. On coming across German *hauptstadt*, for instance, the teacher can say: London ist die hauptstadt Englands, Paris ist die hauptstadt Frankreichs, und Kopenhagen ist die hauptstadt Dänemarks—and then ask one of the pupils: Heinrich, weisst du jetzt was hauptstadt bedeutet? Perhaps he will answer, "Capital," but then the teacher can say: Ganz richtig, aber kannst du nicht das wort auf deutsch erklären? The pupil: Ja, die hauptstadt ist die grösste stadt eines landes. The teacher: Ja wohl, es ist die erste stadt, die grösste stadt, die wichtigste oder bedeutendste stadt eines landes. Then he may add: Nun, Johan, kannst du andere hauptstädte Europas anführen, and when he has mentioned a few, the teacher says: Schön, das genügt, and passes on. Even if many words are used, yet they are not superfluous because they are foreign words, and therefore a few minutes' conversation in this manner is about just as useful as if a whole page had been read in the language. And the pupils will ever after remember the meaning of the word *hauptstadt* much better than if the teacher had simply told them the translation and then continued with the reading. In every separate case, the teacher must feel his way to decide where there yet remains something that is not understood, and where further explanation would be superfluous or tiresome; that is also one of the reasons

why such circumlocutions had better be left to the teacher than included in the text-book.

Of course it is necessary to have practice and a good deal of tact in order to give this kind of explanations naturally and well, and carefully adapted to the needs and standpoint of the class ; the teacher must have a pretty good idea of what the class knows beforehand, and thereby which words and expressions he may use with certainty ; the easier and the more colloquial the words are which are used in the circumlocution, and the more concretely it is expressed, the better. It is better to explain too much than too little, and one must not be afraid of using a number of words when they only are in the foreign language. There is some truth in Gabelentz' remark : “Gesprächige leute von engem gedankenkreise sind für den anfang die besten lehrmeister”<sup>1</sup> ; the teacher must not exactly make himself stupid, but he must admit that no matter how high he himself stands intellectually, he can very well learn something from the nursery-method of teaching languages : for instance, that taciturnity or conciseness of expression do not lead to the goal. It pays to give some attention to this form of instruction and to find out what kind of explanations are of the greatest linguistic benefit to the pupils. It is not difficult, as a rule—even without direct questions, which, however, the teacher ought not to be sparing of<sup>2</sup>—to feel what is understood and what is not, just as the boys can

<sup>1</sup> *Die Sprachwissenschaft*, 70.

<sup>2</sup> But which, of course, ought not to be asked in the form “Do you understand ?” with the obligatory answer “Yes,” which too often means nothing.

easily be trained to say so immediately when there is something that they do not understand. All that is necessary is to make them feel confident that their teacher is always willing and glad to answer their questions, and that they will never be made fun of for asking. Sometimes, of course, he may also make another pupil answer the question if it is an easy one.

The following may serve as a connected specimen of the method of procedure, even if I have, perhaps, explained a word or two which for an English class would need no explanation.

*Devant la porte d'une maison forestière* [c'est à dire une maison située dans une forêt. Vous ne savez pas ce que c'est qu'une forêt? Eh, bien, c'est plus grand qu'un bois, une très grande collection d'arbres, ça s'appelle une forêt. Adolphe, peux-tu me nommer une forêt en Angleterre? La maison dont nous allons parler, était située dans le milieu d'une forêt, et devant la porte] *une jeune femme, les bras nus, cassait du bois à coups de hache sur une pierre.* [Elle avait les bras nus, il n'y avait rien pour couvrir ses bras, elle n'avait pas de manches. Pierre, dis-moi si Jean a les bras nus? Elle cassait du bois (shown by a gesture) et elle employait pour ça une hache (if the word is not known, and is not understood at once, you may give the translation); chaque fois qu'elle fait un coup de hache elle casse un morceau de bois.] *Elle était grande et bien faite, une fille de forêt, fille et jemme de forestiers* [son père et son mari étaient des forestiers, ils avaient des

emplois dans la forêt ; et elle avait été élevée dans la forêt de sorte qu'elle appartenait tout à fait à la forêt. C'est ce qu'on a exprimé en l'appelant fille de forêt.] *Une voix criea de l'intérieur de la maison : Nous sommes seules ce soir, Berthine, il faut rentrer [il faut que tu rentres], voilà la nuit [il commence à se faire tard] ; il y a peut-être des Prussiens [les Prussiens sont les habitants de la Prusse ; ceci se passe pendant la guerre entre les Allemands et les Français—il y a peut-être des Prussiens] et des loups qui rôdent [qui vont ça et là ; le mot rôder s'emploie très souvent en parlant de bêtes féroces].* *Pai fini, maman, répond la jeune femme, n'aie pas peur ; il fait encore jour.* [Elle dit que la nuit n'est pas encore arrivée ; elle y voit encore, et elle n'a pas peur, elle ; mais, du reste, elle a fini son travail ; il n'y a plus de bois à casser.]

*Puis elle ferma les volets* [les volets, ce sont les pièces de bois qu'on applique sur les fenêtres pour les protéger. Paul, dis-moi s'il y a des volets sur les fenêtres de cette salle-ci ? Il y en avait dans la maison dont nous parlons dans l'histoire ; Berthine les ferma], *rentra, et poussa les lourds verrous de la porte* [un verrou est fait de fer, on le pousse pour empêcher d'ouvrir la porte.]

*Sa mère filait auprès du feu.* [To explain *filer*, a gesture and the imitation of the sound of the wheel may be employed, or else the translation supplemented, perhaps, by : filer, ça vient de fil puisqu'en filant on fait des fils.]

*Je ne suis pas tranquille, dit-elle, quand le père est dehors. [Vous voyez que la mère a plus peur, elle, que la fille. C'est que son mari n'est pas là.] Deux femmes, ça n'est pas fort. [Ce n'est pas beaucoup ; c'est si peu de chose que deux femmes si les Prussiens viennent.]*

*La jeune répondit :*

*Oh ! je tuerais bien un loup ou un Prussien tout de même. Et elle montrait du doigt un gros revolver suspendu au-dessus de la cheminée. [La cheminée, c'est là où on fait du feu.]*

*Son mari s'était engagé dans l'armée [il s'était fait soldat] au commencement de la guerre, et les deux femmes étaient demeurées seules avec le père, le vieux Nicolas Pichon, qui avait refusé de quitter sa demeure pour rentrer en ville [refusé ? Si tu dis à Alfred de te prêter son canif, il refuse s'il dit : "Non, je ne veux pas te prêter mon canif." On avait dit à Pichon d'aller en ville, mais il avait dit : "Non, je ne veux pas quitter ma maison" ; donc il avait refusé].*

*La ville prochaine, c'était Rethel. On y était patriote [vous savez que celui qui aime sa patrie, est nommé patriote] ; et les bourgeois [les habitants de la ville] avaient décidé de résister à l'ennemi. Tous — boulangers, épiciers, bouchers, menuisiers, libraires, pharmaciens, manœuvraient à des heures régulières [Tout le monde s'était fait soldats ; le boulanger, c'est celui qui vend du pain ; l'épicier vend des épices, du thé, du café, du chocolat, et*

mille autres choses ; le menuisier fait des tables et des chaises ; le libraire vend des livres ; le pharmacien vend tout ce dont on a besoin quand on est malade—donc vous voyez que tous les hommes, de toutes occupations et de toutes classes, allaient manœuvrer tous les jours à une heure fixe] *sous les ordres de M. Lavigne, ancien sous-officier de dragons* [il n'était plus sous-officier, mais il l'avait été ; c'est ce qui est indiqué par le mot *ancien*], etc., etc.

It is best to go through the lesson for the next time in the beginning of the hour, when both the teacher's and the pupils' powers are freshest, and when there is sure to be plenty of time for it ; at the end of the hour the teacher may be too hurried and nervous in his anxiety to get through the proper amount before the bell rings. In going through it, the teacher may either let the pupils look at their books or require all books to be closed. The latter is the better way, since then the pupils can give more undivided attention to the teacher ; for they must drink in all his words and follow his slightest movements. In that case it is no doubt always best for him to write down on the blackboard each new word as he explains it, and after everything has been explained he may close either by reading the piece aloud himself (without interpolations) or by letting one of the pupils read it. Yet it is not well to follow one method of procedure all the time ; and if the piece is easy, so that there are only a few new words, it may immediately be read aloud by one of the pupils (slowly, not in a forced way !), who may stop and ask whenever

there is anything that he does not understand. If a sentence contains two or three unfamiliar words or some other difficulty which has given occasion for a question, it must by all means be read again connectedly without interruption as soon as a period has been reached. Finally the teacher can, if it seems necessary, as a further guarantee, let one of the pupils give a free rendering of the contents in his native language; that is a sort of control, at all events until the class has become quite accustomed to having the lesson gone through in this way.

Let me suggest here that, in going through the new lesson, the teacher can also counteract the injury which an unusual order of words or expression occurring in a selection of poetry might do to the pupil's instinct for the natural language, by giving the prose order of words and explaining it. For instance, the lines: "And everybody in the house On tip-toe has to creep" can first be explained as if they ran: "And everybody in the house has to creep on tip-toe"; again, such an expression as *at eve* may be altered to *in the evening*. Then when the pupil sees the changed order of words and the unusual expression in his book, he will understand that they are due to the poetical form. Therefore he will not be tempted to imitate them; if he should do so in later exercises, the teacher must correct him, since there is no earthly reason why the pupil should practise *using* anything else but everyday language. It is, however, a matter of course that whenever I have used verses in my own books for beginners in English, I have tried to find such as contained very few deviations from the usual form of the language.

## VI

WE have then come to the following result with respect to translation as a means of interpreting a foreign language to the pupils (p. 56 *a*): it is not the only and the best means ; it ought to be used sparingly ; and at all events it is not necessary to translate whole connected pieces, but merely a word or, at the very most, a sentence now and then. But this investigation has already thrown some light upon our next point, namely, translation as *a means of testing* whether the pupils understand the foreign language (p. 56 *b*).

Here, too, observation may take the place of translation. The pupil who obeys the teacher's command, *montre-moi la fenêtre*, by pointing at the window shows that he understands the word just as well as the one who in answer to the question : what is the meaning of *fenêtre*? answers, window. Likewise the one who can point to the right thing when the teacher shows him a picture and says : *où est le chapeau du garçon*? *où sont ses souliers*? *vois-tu le toit de la maison*? etc., or the one who carries out a command like *prends la craie*, *lève-toi*, *assieds-toi*, *donne-moi ton livre*, *prends le livre de Jean et donne-le à Henri*—especially when he at the same time says : *voilà la fenêtre*, *voilà le chapeau du*

*garçon, voilà la craie, je me lève, etc.*, with a correct application of the words desired. Nor can there be any doubt that a boy has understood a French question when he can give a sensible answer in the same language, or that he has understood a narrative which has been told or read to him when he can retell it (in English, or still better in French).

The teacher is no doubt most tempted to let the pupils translate when he wants to make sure that they know the new selection which has been assigned to them for home-study. But even in this case, if the teacher has only gone through the lesson on assigning it (as indicated above) in a detailed and lively way, and with continual appeal to the pupils, so that the whole does not become a mere monologue by the teacher, the translation test is not as necessary as it would have been if the lesson had either not been gone through at all or if the teacher had merely translated it rapidly. He will often find it sufficient to ask a question now and then about some single point in the selection, especially if the selection is used for such exercises as will be described below, which directly and indirectly show whether the pupils have understood it all or not.

But still, let us assume that the teacher insists on having the selection translated—and of course this may always be a good thing once in a while by way of a change, most so perhaps when the teacher has not been quite able to digest and absorb the new methods. Then the best thing for him to do is to require the translation immediately, before the pupil has read the piece aloud. This is the most reliable test as to whether the lesson really has been learned in time, for the pupil has not the chance while he is

reading aloud to speculate about how it is to be translated, and, on the other hand, when he comes to read it in the foreign language, he is not disturbed by irrelevant thoughts in his native language. Besides, the teacher must understand that this translation is not the most important event of the hour ; it ought therefore to occupy as little time as possible. The pupil must be required to deliver his translation quickly, and it is not necessary to criticise the English expressions with pedantic exactitude. As soon as it is clear that the pupil understands perfectly, it is better for the teacher himself to give the correct English expression in passing, than to waste time in letting him find it out for himself.

A little turn of expression, a word-formation, or an order of words which is not quite English can very well be allowed to pass unnoticed ; it is just when there is no attention paid to these things that they are less apt to be injurious to the pupil's English than when the translation is treated as if it were the only thing. In case of any unusually awkward expression, the teacher can indulge in a hearty laugh together with the pupils and say : " Well, that is not the very best English you are giving us, but the meaning is clear enough, and all that we are concerned with here is if you understand the French, and that you do. Of course we know that you would never seriously say or write anything like that in your mother-tongue." No more attention than this, it seems to me, ought to be paid to the English in these oral translations—the less we occupy ourselves with our native language during the French or German lessons, the less will it become contaminated :

good English is not to be learned in *those* lessons, and poor English the teacher must give both himself and his pupils as little occasion as possible to use.

It is a different matter when *advanced pupils* can get both pleasure and benefit out of occasional exercises in translation. Then these must be chosen so that there are considerable deviations between the foreign language and English, which of course does not mean that the selected specimen of the foreign language itself need be difficult to understand. When the pupils are not daily occupied with translation, but move freely in the foreign language, it would just be great sport for them for a change to have a contest as to who could find the best and most exact English equivalents for foreign expressions. Thus there is no little difference between this kind of exercise and those now prevalent sight translations whose chief object seems to be to test the vocabulary of the pupils. The translation exercise that I have in mind should be conducted on about these lines: the selection should be read aloud to the class; if it contains any unfamiliar words, they should be explained in the manner described above, or, if they are translated instead, there should be given (as in a dictionary) perhaps five or six English equivalents to choose between; thereupon the pupils (in class under supervision) write their translations, which the teacher afterwards reads aloud and compares, so that the pupils themselves may judge as to whose translation has come nearest to the original and as to whether that rendering is to be preferred where every little element in the original has been taken into account but where the English has thus become a little bit long drawn

out, or that rendering which in pith and euphony can stand comparison with the original, but where every detail has not been strictly included, etc. In short, the exercise is not to test the pupils' knowledge in the foreign language, but to give them some idea of the difficulties which the *art* of translation has to contend with ; and for the same reason the pupils might also be asked sometimes to try their skill in a metrical translation of a piece of poetry, but perhaps only in such a way that all participation in the contest is quite voluntary. Such selections might be chosen where we have good poetical translations in our literature, which could then be compared with the efforts of the pupils.<sup>1</sup>

Some few exercises in artistic translation, which the teacher carefully goes through with them, will help to give the more advanced pupils a vivid perception of some of the most delicate shades of variation in the languages as means of expression for human thought—but as the daily bread of language instruction that kind of exercise is not to be recommended, especially not for beginners.

In the daily teaching of languages it is in a number of cases quite superfluous to let the pupils translate. If the reading selections are as easy as is desirable, there will be some sentences in each lesson where neither the vocabulary nor the construction presents the slightest difficulty. In other sentences, the difficulty is simply due to a new word, but if the teacher just devotes a few minutes right away to hearing the new words, it is not necessary to have those

<sup>1</sup> As an introduction to these exercises, the teacher might compare several different translations of a part of Goethe, for instance, with each other, and with the original.

sentences translated either. There are, as we know, many sentences which can be understood without any difficulty at all, but which are still difficult to translate ; if the pupil knows the meaning of *schwören*, he will readily understand "er hat hoch und teuer geschworen," but it will not be so easy for him to find the best way of rendering the adverbs, and it is really purposeless to waste time over them. (See also above, p. 50).

Then finally there remains one or another really complicated sentence, which can be separated out from the rest and translated by the pupils—if the teacher in order to save time does not prefer to translate the whole of it himself. To test the pupil's comprehension of single words by letting him explain them in the language is not very practical except to a limited extent; it might only be useful in dealing with clever advanced pupils where it would not necessarily degenerate into a mere committing of definitions to memory. It is therefore more properly in place in university instruction than in schools.

If any one now says that this method of procedure by which translation as a test of the pupils' comprehension of what they have read is limited to the least possible, and in many lessons even the very last remnant of it is done away with, is far less satisfactory than the old-fashioned translating over and over again of the whole lesson, and that the teacher thus has no means of knowing what the pupils understand and what not, I answer that, in the first place, the pupils' comprehension of a piece which they have even translated several times in the old way is often poor enough ; the most incredible thoughtlessness can thrive under the

shelter of rehearsed translations. In the second place (and this is more important) the new method, when applied in the right way, offers such an abundant variety of means by which to sound the pupils and test how deeply they are penetrating into both the language and contents of their reading, that the teacher can easily feel sure of all essentials. This will be made perfectly plain in the following description of the manner in which the lessons ought to be conducted.

The selection must be read aloud. This had best be done—at all events as a rule—by the teacher first; of course he read it yesterday when he went through it for the first time, but he did it more slowly, interrupting himself with explanations, etc., for it was new for the pupils, and it was necessary for them to comprehend the meaning. But now the teacher may read it quickly, fluently, with the proper “expression,” in short, in a lively and natural manner. Then the pupil (the pupils) reads the same. At the beginner-stage, the teacher must read each sentence by itself and then get the pupils to repeat it while they have the teacher’s pronunciation fresh in mind. Later on the teacher may take larger sections, which may be parceled out to the pupils in not too small portions. And one cannot be too particular with the way in which this reading is done; such stuttering, with pauses between words belonging closely together, and neglect of natural and necessary pauses, which used to be the rule, ought never to be tolerated, not even as an exception. Even the first beginners ought to be required to read each sentence connectedly with natural expression; the teacher will not regret any trouble taken on

this account, even if it involves ever so much repetition. The more attention that is paid to this in the first few months, the easier will it be later to require the pupils to read well—that is, intelligibly and intelligently. This reading aloud, besides being an exercise in pronunciation, also has its other advantages for teaching purposes. Milton, already, said that it is easy to hear only from the way in which a piece is read, if the reader understands it or not. A really good reader can in the most delicate manner lay bare his appreciation, and vice versa it is not difficult for a teacher quick of hearing to detect, through a pupil's uncertainty, false emphasis, etc., what he has not understood (or learned) in the piece he is reading—and then he can pounce on him and get him to disclose the gap in his knowledge. When this is filled up, of course he must read the piece again better than the first time. The reading (or reciting) of dialogues, with the parts assigned to various members of the class, is always amusing, and can easily be used as a means of encouraging natural emphasis and expression.

*Reading in unison* ought not to be neglected; it has the advantage of occupying the whole class at once, so that the pupils get more practice in producing the foreign sounds than when each one reads separately. Of course the teacher cannot exercise so sharp a control as when he hears one at a time, but yet he has by no means lost his control; by practice, he can learn to detect single mistakes through the whole chorus, and can even be tolerably certain as to where they come from, and then he can get the suspected pupil (or pupils) to read the difficult part alone. A help of a similar nature in language-instruction is *singing*. When a

teacher knows how to get his pupils to learn to sing some of the verses in the reader, such class-singing will be found to be both beneficial and enlivening; the words are more easily remembered and the pronunciation is improved. Singing in a foreign language as a factor in teaching was already a number of years ago used by Paul Passy; it plays an important part in the well-known "Palmgrenske samskola" in Stockholm and in several German schools, and has now of late years also been put into practice by some Danish teachers in a very enjoyable manner; on several occasions, the pupils have even given up a part of their recess in order to sing foreign songs, when the teachers in adjoining classes have looked askance at the singing during the lesson-hours.

The oftener a piece is recited by a pupil, the more firmly are the single words and especially the word-combinations rooted in his memory; indeed it has even been attempted to base a whole system of instruction on this experience, as for instance in v. Pfeil's highly interesting pamphlet: "Wie lernt man eine sprache am leichtesten und besten?" (Breslau, 1884), and in several other works by the same author, especially his "Eins," Beiträge zur erziehung im hause (3rd ed. Leipzig, 1879), which is also valuable for other pedagogical suggestions. His method of procedure is simple: no grammar; no translation from the mother-tongue; only one language at a time, which then is pursued at full speed (as a rule, six or more hours a week) in the following manner. From the very beginning, an author is taken up; the same piece (a couple of lines to begin with) is first read aloud by the teacher, then by the pupil (if

necessary, several times), is thereupon translated word by word by the teacher ("to the complete neglect of German sentence-construction; I would not tolerate having turns of expression rendered into good German") and afterwards in the same way by the pupil, is then read aloud by the pupil twice more in the course of the same lesson and once again in the beginning of the next; finally every Monday, the pupil reads aloud all that has been gone through in the preceding week, and, not stopping at that, whole books or large sections of books may be read through connectedly after they have in this manner been studied in instalments. Translation is omitted as soon as there is no danger of miscomprehension, and can soon be quite dispensed with in dealing with easy sentences, which then are only *read* through the stated number of times. During this repeated recitation of the foreign sentences—at least four times after the pupil has understood their meaning—the mother-tongue steps into the background of its own accord, as it were, and the idioms of the foreign language take firm hold upon the memory. So far v. Pfeil, who, as he himself asserts—and why should we not believe the man?—has had good results in the course of a short time, both in taking and giving instruction according to this method, which, to be sure, he has only employed in private instruction, never having tried it in a class. The impulse to make independent use of the language-material thus learned makes its appearance very early. Thus v. Pfeil tells about a pupil thirty-two years old, who was brought up in a country school and who had never before learned any foreign language, but who after

ten lessons wrote him an Italian letter filling four octavo pages, which, if not quite correct, was still quite intelligible.

But the method is terribly spiritless and mechanical, perhaps you will say. Oh, yes—but is it really more spiritless to read something aloud many times in which there is some meaning—and some meaning which you understand—than to translate something just as many times in which there is no meaning at all, to say nothing of all the other inane things which our old methods bring in their train, such as grammatical rigmaroles, etc. However, it is by no means my intention to give the v. Pfeil method an unqualified recommendation, at all events not for school purposes; it is too monotonous, and a more varied method of instruction may surely have the same or greater advantages. Already, in the preceding suggestions, it will have been noticed that there were several deviations from v. Pfeil's method of procedure; here I shall merely call attention to some things which we can learn from it: first, that we must as soon as possible dispense with translation where it is decidedly superfluous; and secondly, that our most important object, namely, that the foreign turns of expression shall make such an impression upon our pupils that they themselves can use them on occasion, cannot be attained without much repetition.

During the first lessons, it is of so much importance for the pupils to catch and reproduce the sounds that the repetitions which are necessary for practice in pronunciation also serve to impress the sentences on their memory; the teacher must only make sure that the pupils know the meaning of each sentence before they begin to practise

pronouncing it, and that they do not forget it, so that the words become merely meaningless sounds. Such a selection as the one introducing my French primer (*La chèvre*)<sup>1</sup> lends itself well to this purpose; it occasions many repetitions of the same sentences, still without becoming tiresome, and the rhythm encourages natural, fluent and non-stuttering recitation.

Later on, of course, there is no necessity for so much repetition merely for the sake of the pronunciation. Then one might require the texts to be committed to memory; but this involves the danger that they might be learned and remembered as lifeless series of words without any regard for their meaning, especially if the teacher makes a routine of it. But it might be quite useful every half-year, for instance, or perhaps a little oftener, for the pupils to be assigned each a piece to commit to memory; they may themselves choose one of the pieces which have been read, and then they must be expected to recite it with a very good pronunciation and correct expression; no parrot-performance! But otherwise the main point is for the pupils to be occupied with the text repeatedly in such a way that they do not lose sight of the meaning, so that they may thus become so familiar with it that at last they know it almost or entirely by heart without having been directly required to commit it to memory. And this can at the same time be done in such a way that the pupils are led to say a number of things without following them in the printed text, so that imperceptibly they are being pre-

<sup>1</sup> Somewhat similar to "The House that Jack Built." *Biquette veut pas sortir des choux.*

pared to be able to say something in the language quite of their own accord.

The teacher can divide the day's lesson into sentences, which he pronounces and the pupils repeat after him. They have all closed their books, and when the teacher says a sentence, no one knows who is to repeat it. By this manner of teaching, which is also practicable in connection with the exercises which I shall suggest later, the teacher makes sure that a pupil's attention cannot wander in the confidence that it is some one else's turn ; it is every one's turn all the time. Thus the teacher says, for instance : *Les abeilles ressemblent aux mouches* ; *Pierre, répète*.—*Peter* : *L. a. r. a. m.*—*Teacher* : *Jean, répète ça encore*.—*John* : *L. a. r. a. m.*—*Teacher* : *Mais elles ont un aiguillon* ; *répète, Charles*.—*Charles* : *m. e. o. u. ai*.—*Teacher* : *Et elles piquent très fort quand elles sont en colère* ; *répète tout ça, Adolphe*, etc. Or, by way of a change, the teacher can let the first one who repeats the sentence mention one of his comrades, who is to repeat it again.

Let me remark in passing that I have always given my pupils French names immediately in one of the first lessons ; they are written on the blackboard (in phonetical transcription of course, see below), and are very quickly learned ; as a rule, they are simply translations of their first names, occasionally of a nickname, etc. It amuses the pupils, and the teacher has the advantage of being able to use their names in the middle of a French sentence without marring the run of the language.

Other similar methods : pupil A reads aloud ; after

every sentence, either the teacher or he himself appoints someone to repeat.—Or: the teacher reads a sentence aloud, then says: traduis, Jules; and after Julius' translation: répète ça en français, Paul. This is better than to let the same pupil first translate and then say it in French, for thus neither one has to make a sudden change from one basis of articulation to another.—Or: when a piece has been read aloud as a whole, the teacher may render it into English, a sentence at a time, and get the pupils to express the same thought in French. This is, of course, the most difficult of these methods and ought to be employed with caution, for the pupils may easily be tempted to *translate* from English (that is, to construct their French after the English) instead of reproducing the French which has been given, so that we thus risk all the dangers which are commonly associated with the old-fashioned method of translation from the native to the foreign language (ct. below). Therefore it were best that this kind of exercise merely be used occasionally, and only when the selection employed is otherwise so familiar to the pupils that they almost have it by heart in its French form. A variation of all these exercises is, instead of a single pupil, to let the whole class repeat the sentence in unison.

If the pupils should begin to lag, it indicates that the class is not yet sufficiently familiar with the text, and then the best thing to do is to say: Well, now you read the piece through three times in chorus and then we shall begin from the beginning in the same way as before with repetition without the book. It does not take long before the teacher can to advantage enter upon little deviations from

what the pupils know from the book; thus he secures himself against thoughtless pattering out of what has been committed to memory at home—which of course the attentive teacher easily can detect through the manner in which the pupil reads. But too great deviations are scarcely advisable; they easily lead to confusion and to the danger of wandering too far from the matter in hand, which is of course to make the pupils thoroughly familiar with the text. As examples of permissible changes of the sentences which have just been employed, I shall mention: *Une abeille ressemble à une mouche (L'abeille ressemble à la mouche) mais elle a un aiguillon | et elle pique très fort quand elle est en colère*—or: *Les abeilles ressemblent beaucoup aux mouches, | mais elles ont un petit aiguillon, et elles piquent fort. . . .* Or one may interpolate: *les mouches ressemblent aux abeilles, | mais elles n'ont pas d'aiguillon, | et elles ne piquent pas comme les abeilles.* It is best not to enter upon greater deviations, because then it will too frequently be necessary to let a pupil translate the sentence constructed by the teacher, since otherwise it is not certain whether the whole class has understood it or not.<sup>1</sup> The most important thing in these exercises, as also in the exercises with questions (see below), is not to let the pupil get beyond his depth so that he will become frightened and lose confidence, for then he will never learn to swim.

We have hitherto assumed that the pupils repeat what

<sup>1</sup> The text-books may sometimes contain a whole piece in two versions; perhaps the teacher himself may occasionally undertake to re-write (on the blackboard) or re-tell a selection.

has been said orally ; if the repetition is written, we have *dictation*—an exercise which must not be neglected and which can be conducted in different ways, partly parallel with those just mentioned. The teacher can either say a sentence or one of the boys can read it aloud ; once may be enough, but the teacher may also say it twice, or else say it himself first and then let one of the pupils repeat it before it is written down ; it may be a sentence taken from the reader (first stage), a sentence taken from the reader but slightly changed (second stage), or an entirely new piece (only for advanced students) ;<sup>1</sup> the dictation may be written on the blackboard or in copy-books (on slates) ; one pupil may be occupied in the first way while the rest of the class is occupied in the second way ; sometimes the class itself may correct the mistakes ; if there is black-board space enough, several pupils can be writing the same or different things at the same time. The dictation may be required to be written with phonetical transcription (see below) or orthographically, or one pupil may write in one way, another in the other way, the two being afterwards compared.

Finally, dictation may be used in connection with several of the exercises which I shall suggest later. A question is dictated, and the pupils are required to write both the question and the answer ; a sentence is dictated in the

<sup>1</sup> And even for them only in small measure, since it must be remembered that nothing is learned thereby, but it is merely a test in what has been learned, and that the mistakes made by the pupils, as we know from experience, easily take root in their memory because they have written them, and are not effaced by the teacher's corrections.

first person, which is then to be inflected in all persons, etc. The advantages of dictation are, that it trains the pupils in rapid and sharp comprehension of spoken words, that it gives the teacher an effective means of testing what each pupil has comprehended, and that the pupils generally remember pretty well what they have once written down. But the disadvantage of dictation, as of all written class work, is that it consumes more time than oral exercises. Dictation with "catches" is of course beneath the dignity of a modern language teacher.

## VII

I SHALL here deal with various kinds of exercises in which the pupils have to say something in the foreign language which they have not either seen in their books or heard from someone else just a moment before. Some of the first and easiest of these are *arithmetical exercises*. But here I must first stop to make a remark about the numerals in general. It is not so seldom that we find pupils in our schools who have studied French for several years without having become perfectly familiar with the French numerals ; they have great difficulty with dates. What is the cause of this phenomenon ? Of course the French numerals are difficult, more difficult than the German ; but the French verbs are also more difficult than the German, so that alone is not the reason why this class of words troubles the pupils. No ; the matter is quite simple. Only imagine a French reader so planned that there is not a single French adjective in the text, while English words like "good," "ugly," "dazzling," "white" are mixed in among the French words. Would the pupils then be able to learn the French adjectives ? But is not this exactly what is done in the case of the numerals ? It makes no difference if the French text has 1888 or "eighteen hun-

dred and eighty-eight," in both cases the pupil has to translate from English to French when he is reading the passage aloud. There are scarcely any exercises at all in translating numerals from French or in understanding French numerals; as far as this class of words is concerned, the very poorest method of translation is used, the one by which the pupil is himself required to construct expressions in the foreign language according to certain rules, without having previously had sufficient opportunity to see and hear how the foreigners themselves go about it. In the home preparation we may be very sure that only the most conscientious pupils trouble themselves to think about how 1793 ought to be read.

Then here we have a point where reform is necessary and unusually easy to bring about. Let the Arabic numerals disappear from all text-books for beginners in a foreign language, and then if they contain enough of numerals written out in full—and especially if the teacher drills the pupils a good deal in simple arithmetical exercises in the foreign language in the manner now to be suggested—it will be found that when the pupils are so far advanced as to give up text-books and read literary works, they will have no difficulty in reading all the numerals which they happen to come across fluently and correctly.

Already, at a very early stage, after one or two months' instruction, the teacher can begin with arithmetical exercises, because they do not require any great command of language; they not only give the pupils practice in the numerals themselves, but also in catching the foreign words and sounds. The question is directed, as suggested above,

to the whole class, and then the teacher points out—by name or merely by a glance—the one who is to answer it ; the answer must include the question. Thus the teacher : **Deux fois six, combien, Henri ?**—Henry : **Deux fois six font douze.** (Répète, Jean). **Trois et neuf font, Alfred ?** A. : **Trois et neuf font onze.** T. : **C'est faux, n'est-ce pas, Louis ?**—Louis : **Oui, trois et neuf font douze.** (Or : **Est-ce correct, Louis ?** or : **Est-ce bien ça, Louis ?**) In addition to this, sums may be set containing concrete numbers, especially such as may familiarize the pupils with the foreign coins : **deux francs, combien de sous valent-ils ?** **trois sous, combien de centimes ? . . .** ; or a little rule-of three sum : **si une poire coûte trois centimes, combien cinq poires ?** Or, for instance : **deux œufs à deux sous et trois pommes à un sou, combien ça fait-il ?** The teacher must not be afraid of using several whole lessons for such exercises, and afterwards he can take a few minutes of a lesson now and then in order to keep the pupils in practice. Since of course it is not arithmetic that is being taught, it is best to stick to easy problems, mostly addition and multiplication. Of course, by way of a change, one pupil may be allowed to give a problem to another to solve.

The numerals may also fittingly be brought in when the vocabulary is to be reviewed, the boys being allowed to count with concrete numbers in a certain order, so that each boy in turn has to think of some word which has not previously been used during the lesson ; it is often funny to see how eager they are to outdo each other. And it often happens that a pupil who has said **Pass**, suddenly recalls a whole series of words when one of his comrades

mentions a word from a selection which has not been broached before; the one thought suggests another that is associated with it. In French, the pupils must also pay attention to the form of the numeral, which changes according as it precedes a vowel or a consonant.

It very seldom happens that a boy uses a word which is impossible after a numeral, as for instance, *venir* or *bonsoir* or *trot*, which indicates that he is ignorant of the word's signification, but then the whole class laughs of its own accord. But it is the easiest thing in the world to hear from the manner in which the words are said if they are really understood; and, in case of doubt, the teacher can suddenly ask for a translation; this is, however, generally superfluous, for the pupils only mention words which they understand, but still of course it is good for them to review them.

One of the most important exercises is to transpose a selection which has been read into *questions and answers*. The teacher can begin this rather early, but he must from the very beginning and always strictly require the *pupil's answer to be given in the form of a complete sentence*. We have no use for such an undignified performance in which the pupil gets along bravely if only he is able to answer all his teacher's questions with either *Oui, monsieur*, or *Non, monsieur*, or some other equally intelligent answer. As an illustration of the kind of exercise I mean, take for instance the following one based on one of the very first texts in my own French Reader, which runs:

Enfant gâté.

Veux-tu du pâté?

Non, maman, il est trop salé!

Veux-tu du rôti ?

Non, maman, il est trop cuit !

Veux-tu du jambon ?

Non, maman, il n'est pas bon !

Veux-tu du pain ?

Non, maman, le pain ne vaut rien !

Enfant gâté, tu ne veux rien manger,

Enfant gâté, tu seras fouetté !

The following questions may be based on this piece.

The pupils' answers are given in [ ] :—Es-tu un enfant ? [Oui, monsieur, je suis un enfant.] Es-tu un enfant gâté ? [Non, monsieur, je ne suis pas un enfant gâté.] L'enfant gâté veut-il du pâté ? [Non, monsieur, il ne veut pas du pâté; or : l'enfant gâté ne . . .] Veut-il du rôti ? [Non, monsieur, il ne veut pas du rôti.] Veut-il du pain ? [Non, monsieur, il ne veut pas du pain.] Veut-il du jambon ? [Non, monsieur, il ne veut pas du jambon.] Pourquoi ne veut-il pas du pâté ? [Parce que le pâté est trop salé.] Pourquoi ne veut-il pas du jambon ? [Il ne veut pas du jambon parce qu'il n'est pas bon.] Pourquoi ne veut-il pas du rôti ? [Parce qu'il est trop cuit.] Pourquoi ne veut-il pas du pain ? [Parce que le pain ne vaut rien.] Qu'est-ce qui est trop salé ? [C'est le pâté qui est trop salé.] Qu'est-ce qui ne vaut rien ? [C'est le pain qui ne vaut rien.] Qu'est-ce qui est trop cuit ? [Le jambon est trop cuit.] L'enfant gâté sera-t-il fouetté ? [Oui, monsieur, il sera fouetté.] Pourquoi sera-t-il fouetté ? [Parce qu'il ne veut rien manger.] Va-t-on chercher le bâton pour taper l'enfant gâté ? [Oui, monsieur, on s'en va chercher le bâton pour venir taper l'enfant.]

Thus it will be seen that a simple little piece can suggest a large number of questions, and it is important, especially in the beginning, for the teachers to ask the pupils *as many questions as possible* in order to accustom them to the exercise, so that they may take part intelligently and fluently. Anyone who sees all these questions in print may think that they occupy a long time in a monotonous way; but after a little practice, on the part of both the teacher and the pupils, the exercise really proceeds very rapidly. In dealing with beginners, it were best for the teacher in formulating his questions to *deviate as little as possible from the words of the text*, so that they can be used in the answers almost or entirely without any change. It is not assumed in this exercise that the pupils have committed the piece to memory, but of course the exercise itself tends to make them thoroughly familiar with it. In order to give the pupils confidence, and in order not to require too much of them immediately, the teacher can in the first few lessons allow them to keep their books open while the piece is gone through once in question form, so that they can look up their answers when they cannot remember them. Then they can be told to close their books and answer the same or almost the same questions without referring to the text. Of course, the first few times when such an exercise is used, it is also well for the teacher to direct the same question to several boys in succession; and the very first time he can also write a few questions with their corresponding answers on the blackboard, in order to show the class how the exercise is to proceed.

Even if the pupils learn the piece by heart in the course

of the exercise, yet their answering the teacher's questions does not become mechanical, since they have to consider the form of the question, and then reflect over what is to be included in the answer, and how it is to be worded and constructed. Of course, the teacher ought to feel gratified if the pupils of their own accord make slight alterations in the words of the book, substitute a pronoun for a substantive, etc., only it is best not to give too early encouragement to great deviations from the text. The last question of the above examples, which is based on a piece that has been read before in the same book, shows how the teacher already at a very early stage can vary a certain day's exercise by bringing into connection with it something previously learned. The pupils will greet such a question with pleasure, partly the pleasure of recognition, and partly the pleasure of the opportunity thus afforded them to feel at home in the language. As time goes, the teacher may depart more and more from the material of the book. For instance, he may use its words in asking the pupils questions about their own personal affairs, or about things in which they are interested outside of their French lessons. If they are having a selection which contains the word *roi* and the names of various countries, the teacher may say : Comment s'appelle le roi d'Angleterre ? (or, notre roi ?) Qui est roi d'Espagne ? etc. ; yes, why not also Comment s'appelle le roi de France ?

In the beginning, it is only the teacher that asks questions, but it does not last very long before the teacher by way of a change can allow the *pupils themselves to ask each other questions* ; thus they learn to construct sentences in the interrogative form, which, when they come to make

practical use of the language, is just as important for them as to be able to answer. In German schools, they have a regular system of exercises on this plan in connection with grammatical categories ; of a given sentence in the book the pupils are to construct first a subject-question, then a verb-question, then an object-question, etc. If, for instance, the sentence is *La mère de Gribouille a cassé sa marmite*, and the teacher wants a subject-question, pupil A asks B : Qui a cassé la marmite ? (or Qui est-ce qui a cassé la marmite ?) ; or a verb-question : Qu'est-ce qu'a fait la mère de Gr. ? ; or an object-question : Qu'est-ce que la mère de Gr. a cassé ? In order to help beginners with the grammatical difficulties, several sentences may be written on the blackboard with their various parts differently underlined. Later on the teacher can tell one of the pupils to change all the sentences in a piece which has been read—of course only in so far as they lend themselves to such a change—into, for instance, object-questions. After each question, the teacher points out the one who is to answer. Then another pupil may change the same sentences (or those in the next paragraph) into subject-questions, etc. Of course the teacher must not put up with a mere mechanical alteration of the text, but must always require the pupils to exercise so much common sense that no questions are made which would not occur in a natural conversation.

When the pupils themselves ask questions, they naturally cannot do anything else but follow the text slavishly as it stands, so therefore it is not advisable always to let *them* ask the question ; the teacher must on the whole avoid getting into any rut. He himself must do the asking rather

frequently ; he may either pounce upon some little point or ask comprehensive questions, including the gist of several sentences. Only he must remember that sentences which are too comprehensive either require too much of the pupils, or are quite empty and meaningless ; besides, the result may only be that the exercise shrinks into almost nothing, since then there can only be two or three questions to correspond to a whole page of the text, and thus the text cannot make as strong and detailed an impression as it should. And, above all, the questions must be asked as naturally as possible.

If this question-exercise is used and all its possibilities for variation exhausted in the right way—with liveliness, tact and constant consideration for the pupils' standpoint—it gives ample and abundant opportunities for the teacher not only to talk to, but with, the pupils in the foreign language ; and notice that it is not "talking to the pupil in a language which he does not yet understand"—this fear is often expressed by those who have misgivings as to the advisability of conversational exercises at an early stage—but from the very beginning nothing is said which the pupil cannot be required to understand and to answer intelligently in the same language.

Quite imperceptibly the teacher may pass from this exercise to *renarration* ; the question has merely to be formulated in such a way that it cannot be answered in a single sentence but only by an account of the contents of at least a few lines or so. Thus longer and longer pieces may be required to be retold, although during the first years it should only be such pieces as have previously been learned and gone through in detail by means of questions

and answers. Later on, the teacher can use pieces for renarration which have not been assigned to the class for preparation ; the teacher reads aloud (or may possibly let one of the pupils do it), if necessary, several times, and thereupon requires as much as possible to be retold either orally or in writing, or first orally, then in writing. Or if there is a sufficient number of copies of the book used, the pupils may be given say ten or twenty minutes in which to read the piece through silently to themselves, and then they can use the rest of the hour to write down what they can remember of it. Such exercises are used to a large extent in teaching the mother-tongue, and it is agreed that they are highly beneficial, because they not only sharpen the powers of apprehension, especially the ability to distinguish between the essential and the unessential, but they also develop linguistic technique, that is the formal command of means of expression, since much of the language used in the original creeps into the renarration and thus becomes the possession of the reteller. Of course the pupils are earlier ripe for such exercises in their native language than in foreign languages, but that does not lessen their value in the two respects mentioned, of which the latter is the more important here, while there is perhaps too great a tendency to attach the chief importance to the former in the teaching of the native tongue. Even when the pupils are far advanced, it is highly beneficial for them to give (French, etc.) reports of something which they have read—not merely simple renarrations of bits of fiction or history, but also résumés of the trend of thought in some philosophical or critical essay, etc.

Many pieces also lend themselves to *reshaping* in various ways, whereby grammatical relations may be practised at the same time as the words and sentences of the selection once more pass in review through the minds of the pupils. All the singulars may be changed to plurals, as far as the plurals make sense in the connection. After the piece has been gone through in its printed form, the pupil reads it aloud, remembering in the case of each word to consider whether or not it has to be changed to the plural and what it would be in the plural. Thus, according to circumstances, there are either nouns, adjectives, pronouns or verbs to be changed. Or what is told about a boy may be said about a girl. Changes in time from "now" to "yesterday," from "to-day" to "in a week," occasion many alterations in the forms of the verbs, fewer in the adverbs. The person may also be changed, especially in such a way that the pupil puts himself in the place of that Peter about whom something is told, and thus substitutes *I* for *he*, etc. ; if desirable, those further alterations may be made which make a letter out of the narrative. A change from the first to the third person can easily be combined with the shifting of tense which gives us indirect instead of direct discourse. Thus the following sentence : " Eh bien, Pierre, dit Jean, qu'est-ce que tu vas faire demain ? Je ne sais pas, dit Pierre." may be changed to : " Jean a demandé à Pierre ce qu'il allait faire le lendemain, et Pierre a répondu qu'il ne savait pas (qu'il n'en savait rien)." In German, this kind of transposition involves such complicated changes (person, mood, order of words) that they cannot be required until at a later stage than in French ; but transposition from

indirect to direct discourse is not very difficult. Changes from the active to the passive must be undertaken with a good deal of care, since there are comparatively few sentences which can be thus transposed without undergoing a shifting of meaning, which it is not always easy to explain or understand the cause of, and many sentences do not lend themselves to such transposition at all. Likewise there are relatively few connected passages where negative sentences can be made affirmative and vice versa without giving us sheer nonsense. So these last two kinds of transposition can, as a rule, only be applied to single sentences, which the teacher has to pick out of their connection ; but when carefully selected in this way they will be found to be very useful, especially in French, where the correct placing of *ne* and *pas* is so important ; they are less useful in German.

Now and then, too, dependent clauses (for instance relative, adverbial clauses, etc.) may be changed to independent clauses and vice versa, and still more complicated changes may be undertaken by which one may try the different ways in which the thoughts of a passage may be linked together.

Of course it is also possible to have mixed exercises of this kind. For instance, pupil A reads aloud ; the teacher interrupts him at the end of a sentence, mentions what kind of change it is to undergo, and thereupon points out one of the other pupils (whose books are closed) who is to make the change. But the teacher must never allow any of these exercises to become something merely mechanical which is turned out according to a certain fixed formula ; the

pupils must always be trained to consider whether a newly constructed sentence makes sense or not ; thereby both their linguistic intuition and their powers of logic are sharpened at the same time.

## VIII

By this time we have fairly encroached upon the question as to the method to be used in training pupils in the *grammar* of a foreign language. I want to introduce my discussion of this subject with the following quotation from N. M. Petersen (*Sprogkundskab i Norden*, Collected Works, Copenhagen, 1870, ii. 297-8):

"With respect to method, the artificial one must be given up and a more natural one must take its place. According to the artificial method, the first thing done is to hand the boy a grammar and cram it into him piece by piece, for everything is in pieces; he is filled with paradigms which have no connection with each other or with anything else in the world . . . he is filled with words, only half of which occur occasionally, and some never at all in what he reads. How old are not the complaints over this perverted method! how many sighs it has occasioned, how much deformity it has produced! On the other hand, the natural method of learning languages is by practice. That is the way one's native language is acquired. The pupil becomes acquainted with the elements and absorbs them, as it were, into his soul in their entirety before he is consciously able to separate and account for

the single parts and their special relations ; he forms whole complete sentences without knowing which is the subject and which the object ; he gradually finds out that he has to give each part of the sentence its correct endings without knowing anything about tense or case. . . . The logical consequence of this, then, is that as a rule one cannot begin with grammar in teaching languages to a child of ten or twelve. His first years at school ought to give him merely materials ; he ought to collect experiences (that is a child's greatest delight), but not speculate over them."

It is now now half a century ago since N. M. Petersen uttered these golden words, and still the old grammar-instruction lives and flourishes with its rigmaroles and rules and exceptions, *that intensely stupid custom the teaching of grammar to children*, as Herbert Spencer calls it. Only few of the boys in our schools who have studied German for several years, are able to connect for instance *um* with the proper case without hesitation ; but there are certainly still fewer who cannot run through *durch* *für* *gegen* *ohne* *um* and *wider* like parrots. But strangely enough this ever present phenomenon does not yet seem to have led to a general acknowledgment of the fact that these grammatical rigmaroles as a rule are scarcely worth as much as the counting-out rigmaroles of the children : eeny meeny miny mo.<sup>1</sup>

And, of course, paradigms which are learned by rote also belong to the category of rigmaroles. "Paradigms ought by all means to be given, but should never be learned by

<sup>1</sup> The only thing in the grammar which it might be reasonable to learn by rote is the numerals.

heart in rigmarole-fashion." (N. M. Petersen.) Thoughtlessness and stupidity thrive excellently on this continual repetition of words as words, that is words without any mutual association, without connection in sentences. Just think of the many thousands of boys and girls who time and again recite : *mourir, mourant, mort, je meurs, je mourus*, and then ask how many of them, yes even of their teachers, ever happen to think that the last form in reality is impossible (at all events in conversations in this life).<sup>1</sup> The percentage is scarcely very large. And when conscientious philologists like Ayer and Sachs give imperative forms like *nais, naissions, laissez*—be born! let us be born!! be ye born!!! it cannot be denied that we are tempted to use the exclamation : "die gelehrten, die verkehrten!" Of course it is not our aim to get rid of such forms as *je mourus* ;<sup>2</sup> what is wrong is the system. I condemn *vivre, vivant, vécu, je vis, je vécus* just as strongly as *mourir*, etc., even if none of these forms is really meaningless. And the reason why I reject this method of teaching languages is because it does not and cannot bring us to our desired goal. The chief absurdity, the one which it is our business to quarrel with,

<sup>1</sup> The story goes that a Swedish dialectologist who was on a tour to investigate how extensively the strong form *dog* (died) was in use, asked a peasant : do you people here say "jag dog" or "jag döde"? The peasant was not a grammarian ; he answered sensibly : well, when we are dead we generally do not say anything.

<sup>2</sup> Kr. Nyrop informs me that he has found "Mais je mourus hier" in Mairet, *La Silvanire*, v. 2, 175, and I myself have come across it in a short story by Zola about the sensations felt by a person who has been buried alive after his apparent death—but that does not make the form more "living."

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is that use of disconnected words for grammatical purposes, which flourishes in all our text-books.

It has often amused me to examine grown-up persons (non-philologists) in what they could remember of the instruction they had received in school in foreign languages. It seems to be extremely common that they have not the slightest idea as to what case for instance a preposition governs, but the rigmarole in which it occurs they generally know by heart. They also know ever so many scraps like *der buchstabe*, *der friede*, *der funke* . . . or *das amt*, *das ass*, *das bad*, *das bild*, *das blatt* . . . but why they have learned these things, and what they were supposed to be good for, to these questions there is generally no answer forthcoming. So those rigmaroles are really of no practical use whatever.

Now, of course, rigmaroles could easily be so arranged—though no one seems to have put it into practice—as to contain an indication of the object in grouping together just those words, for instance by saying *durch das zimmer*, *für*, *gegen* . . . or *durch für* . . . *um wider mich*, or *das amt*. *die ämter*, *das ass* . . . or *das amt*, *ämter*, *bäder*, *bilder*. . . .

But even in this improved form it seems to me that grammatical rigmaroles are of little value just because they accustom the pupils to learn and say things by rote without *thinking*; they are remnants of the old-fashioned would-be pedagogy where a teacher in any subject was satisfied if the pupil only "knew his lesson," that is, could recite the words of the book, and where no one ever thought about understanding or other such-like modern inventions.

The expressions "living" and "dead" are so often used

about languages and words, but those who use them do not always take the trouble to consider in what sense these expressions really have any meaning. A language only lives, and can only live, in a person's mind, and that it lives there means that its component parts are for him associated with certain ideas, which are recalled when he hears the words, and which in turn summon up the corresponding words when he wants to express them, or when he simply wants to make them clear for himself. But ideas do not and cannot exist except in combinations ; an absolutely isolated thought is the same as nothing. It is the same with words ; if they are taken out of their natural surroundings, they suffer atrophy and at last cease to perform the usual function of words, namely to produce ideas. So isolated words, such as are given in rigmaroles and paradigms, are only ghosts or corpses of words. Try to run through the words "jewel, stone, cabbage, knee, owl, toys, louse," and see if a single complete picture has been produced in your mind—but you are no better off when you say the French rigmarole *bijou, caillou, chou, genou, hibou, joujou, pou*. That, as well as *amo, amas, amat, amamus, amatis, amant* and all the others, must by virtue of the fundamental psychical law of the life of language become merely empty jingle and nothing else. Now we see the psychological reason why sensible persons can write such sentences in their books as *je mourus* or the entirely parallel "Wir sind nicht hier." When the mind is occupied with a word as a grammatical phenomenon, the word's normal power of calling forth ideas is of course lessened in a considerable degree.

Furthermore the isolation of words for grammatical purposes may even lead us to make positive mistakes. The pupils are first carefully taught in the grammar that "nobody" in French is *ne personne* and "never" *ne jamais*,<sup>1</sup> and later on it is corrected as a serious mistake when they write *ne personne parlait* or *il ne jamais parle*, mistakes which would never have occurred if the pupils had not been allowed to learn the false formulation. In modern French "nobody" is *personne* and "never" *jamais*, just as "not" is *pas*, etc. *Ne* only exists in connection with a verb, and ought never to be seen or learned by the pupils except in its natural surroundings; out of connection it is no more a word than *un* (in *unfriendly*, *ungracious*, etc.). The rule for its employment can be thus stated in short, that it is placed in front of the verb, always, if the sentence is wholly negative, also often if it is only half negative (by which I mean the well-known cases after *empêcher*, *croire*, comparatives, etc., where *ne* is well on the way to slip out of the living French language, and where we now, after the last ministerial decrees, may allow ourselves a little laxity in teaching these points).<sup>2</sup> Likewise it is only injurious to teach the children that "I" is *je*, "thou" *tu*—as a matter of fact it is *moi*, *toi*, while of

<sup>1</sup> The dots which are given in the printed book between the two words disappear in oral recitation; so they play no part in the minds of the pupils.

<sup>2</sup> The former "redundant" words are now the most important ones, indeed in reality the only important ones, since *Pas du tout* etc., where there is no verb, is fully recognized, and sentences like *Je veux pas* are becoming more and more common in colloquial language.

course "I go, thou goest," is *je vais, tu vas*; what usage has joined together, let no grammar put asunder.

But words, when in their natural connections, show their vitality in other ways besides in summing up the correct ideas; they have another power, which they also lose when they are isolated, namely the power of breeding new connections in the image of the old ones. If I have often reproduced a certain type of word-formation or sentence-construction, then this becomes a part of my mental mechanism in such a way that I unconsciously make something new (coin a new word, construct a new sentence) after the same pattern, after the "analogy" of what I know, whenever I need it, just as the English boy who has often heard superlatives like *hardest, cleanest, highest*, etc., does not need any rule to be able to construct forms like *purest, ugliest, dirtiest*, of his own accord, and who, at the moment when he says them, would not be able even by means of the most scrupulous analysis to decide if he has heard the form often before and is merely reproducing it, or if he himself is creating it without having previously heard it—and, if the latter is the case, if he is creating something which others also have created, or if it is the very first time that the word is used in the language—this is what takes place every minute wherever human languages are spoken.<sup>1</sup> An Englishman has so often heard (and repeated) sentences like "give the man your hand," "I gave the boy a whipping," "he gave his sister

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my remarks on "schaffende und erhaltende analogiebildung," in Techmer's *Internat. Zeitschr. f. allgem. Sprachwissensch.*, iii. (1887), p. 191 ff.

an apple," that he unconsciously forms his sentences according to a scheme where the indirect object always precedes the direct object, and which even without this grammatical terminology and without any rule would lead him quite naturally to say, for instance, "Will you give your father the money?" A Frenchman would just as instinctively say, "Veux-tu donner cet argent à ton père?" because in all the sentences which he has experienced he has heard the "dative" expressed by *à* after the direct object.

But since this takes place by virtue of inviolable psychical laws, it applies not only to the mother-tongue, but also to the foreign languages which we learn later. We simply cannot avoid thus unconsciously forming types or patterns to go by, in using a foreign language, as soon as the conditions for these typical formations are at hand. If, on learning English, a Dane has frequently heard (read) and (especially) used combinations like *up here, in here, in there, out there*, then he will quite naturally say *down there* when he wants to express this thought; it is not at all necessary for him previously to have learned a rule to the effect that "*here and there* in connection with other adverbs of place stand last." As a matter of fact, when we speak or write a foreign language, we employ a number of such rules which we have never seen formulated, and, what is more, also rules which have never at any time been consciously formulated by any grammarian. The reason why we cannot attain the same confidence in all departments of the foreign language that we feel in our native language is of course partly because the conditions are not

so favourable, and partly because our mother-tongue acts as a hindrance on account of the tendency it has to intrude on all occasions and mislead us to construct sentences after *its* pattern.

But the conditions become the more favourable for this unconscious mental activity in our pupils the more we know how to make each sentence in the foreign language have its full effect upon them and become their possession, and the more we can keep the mother-tongue in the background. And although we can never bring it about that our pupils come across the forms in the foreign language even approximately as often as that child does who is learning his native language, yet we can to a large extent make amends for this by bringing a better system into our teaching, so that the acquiring of the language will not depend so much upon chance as is the case when babies learn to talk, just as it is also an advantage that our pupils are older and more developed, and that we can get some help from the written and printed language.

Many of the transposition exercises mentioned in the last section are essentially grammatical, but we can easily hit upon still more exercises by which we may in a systematic way encourage the natural tendency toward type- and series-formations. To conjugate a verb all the way through by itself is the sheerest drudgery, but the exercise immediately becomes both more interesting and more beneficial when it is a whole sentence that is to be tackled. For instance, the teacher can write on the blackboard a sentence like "Je donne un sou à Alfred" and get the pupils to conjugate it through all the persons. In the

beginning he might also write down all the forms of the verb, one under the other ; they are not to be committed to memory, but merely furnish a scheme, which the pupils are to fill out by inserting the correct pronouns before, and *un sou à Alfred* after the verb. Then the next step is to let the pupils use other words instead of *un sou* and *Alfred*, so that pupil A says, for instance, *Je donne un centime à Paul.* B : *tu donnes un franc à Jean.* C : *il donne un livre à papa.* D : *nous donnons des poires à l'épicier*, etc. Then in reality the task which the boys have before them is to hit upon new words to insert (they must make sense!) ; consequently it becomes a kind of game in which the vocabulary is reviewed like the one mentioned above (p. 99), but at the same time the forms of the verb are practised. If a pupil should happen to say, for instance, *ils donnent deux cerises à le maître*, the teacher must only say the sentence himself with the correct *au* and make him repeat it in this form without scolding him,—yes, even without stopping to give a long explanation of why it should be *au* and not *à le* in this case. This kind of exercise can of course be varied in different ways ; such a sentence as *mon père me donne de l'argent* is written down, and the pupils are told to inflect it in all the persons, which of course only involves an alteration of *mon* and *me* ; or the sentence is to be reconstructed with other tenses, etc. More complicated sentences, too, may be conjugated all the way through, either without changing anything but the pronouns and the forms of the verbs, as for instance, *Je suis allé me promener avec mon père* ; *Das habe ich ihm gestern versprochen, und ich werde es ihm morgen geben*—or

in such a way that other things are changed too: *je m'appelle . . .* where the pupil is to insert real names (his own, a comrade's . . . in case it is *vous*, the teacher's); *Ich habe meinen vater um etwas brot gebeten. Du hast deinen vater um etwas geld gebeten. Er hat seinen vater um ein stück papier gebeten. Sie hat ihren vater um einen kuchen gebeten*, etc. Of course one can also assign written exercises of a similar kind, as for instance: construct five sentences like *Le père de Jean est allé à la maison de sa sœur*, using different words in each sentence in place of those here italicized, etc., etc.; but it were best if these sentences were suggested by, or in some way associated with, sentences in the text-book.

Now some people will say that this is only another way of employing those grammatical isolated sentences which I have declaimed against—and they are right in so far as I admit that the more the exercises are made to resemble the old-fashioned ones, the poorer they are for the purpose, and if they are employed to too great an extent they may easily degenerate into tiresome mechanical routine-work. But if used to moderation they will only be beneficial, and then, besides, they differ from the single sentences of the old method in being associated with a text which has been read, so they are not thus quite isolated from a sensible connection; they also differ because translation is not used and is not needed (except when the teacher at long intervals has to make sure that pupil A has understood a sentence given by pupil C, who has used an unusual word); they differ because, translation being omitted, the whole exercise can proceed at a rapid pace; they differ because

the sentences are constructed by the pupils themselves, who are thus compelled all the time to pay attention both to their form and contents; and finally they differ because, as a result of all this, they are more interesting and amusing to the pupils. Furthermore such exercises incite the pupils to want to say something of their own accord, and thus they get a desire to extend their knowledge; they will frequently ask what this or that word which they need in a sentence is in French or German—and in that case the teacher must always answer, but then he must always require, too, that they *learn* the word which has been given them (to prevent them from getting into the habit of asking superficially and carelessly just "for the fun of it"). Finally the pupils will thus be brought to appreciate the benefit of learning grammar; their grammatical knowledge is not sheer theory for them, but is continually converted into effective power and thus becomes easier to remember, for there is no doubt that Goethe is right when he says: "Still all that we can remember of our studies in the end is only what we have been able to find practical use for."

Of course, the sentences constructed by the pupils in the course of any one of the exercises recommended in this book may contain mistakes, and the most serious mistakes must be corrected, yet with as little particularity as possible, if they have nothing to do with the phenomenon which is being or just has been carefully considered and practised, and with as few theoretical reasons as possible. Many exercises can be so arranged that it is scarcely possible for the pupils to make any mistake, and this without becoming less valuable; on the contrary, they will often be

the best, for every sentence which a pupil constructs or says correctly confirms good habits of language. But no matter how much one may favour the theory that "Prevention is better than cure," it is not well to be too anxious to prevent mistakes. One of the ablest advocates of the reform in Germany, Wendt, says: "It is of more importance for the pupil to talk at all than to talk correctly," and although I know what criticism I have to expect from unsympathetic opponents about my encouraging superficiality and not caring a bit about correctness, yet I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting with approbation a Slavic proverb, *Tko zeli dobro govoriti mora natucati* (whoever wants to speak well must murder the language), which Schuchardt has chosen as a motto for his stimulating work about mixed languages,<sup>1</sup> and which he interprets: "Wer aus irgend einem grunde sich scheut eine fremde sprache zu misshandeln, der werd sie nie beherrschen."

In order to reassure people who cannot help feeling anxious, I shall add here three statements from the report of the ninth German "Neuphilologentag" (1901). Klinghardt (p. 100) confesses that he has been converted to the reform, because, in spite of years of vigorous efforts, he had not succeeded by means of the translation method<sup>2</sup> in training the majority of his pupils to grammatical correctness. Headmasters of schools where the old method was employed had also told him that there were still serious grammatical mistakes of form in the written exercises which

<sup>1</sup> *Slavo-deutsches und Slavo-italienisches*, Graz, 1885.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. Translations from the mother-tongue, beginning with single sentences of the usual kind.

were handed in at the final examinations. But, after he had given up the translation procedure, all of his pupils, even the backward ones, had attained to grammatical correctness. Wendt (p. 101) emphatically denied that anything could be gained in grammatical sureness by translation exercises. And Walter (p. 102) repudiated the accusation which is always on the tongue of many of the opponents of reform, that the reformers entirely do away with grammar, by referring to many of these very gentlemen, who, on visiting his school, had expressed surprise at the grammatical sureness displayed by his pupils.

And since I now seem to be in the mood for quotations, I can also refer to Goethe's words: "Thus I had learned Latin, just like German, French, English, only through practice, without rule and without system. Anyone who knows what the state of school instruction was at that time will not find it strange that I neglected the grammar as well as the rhetoric; everything seemed to come naturally to me. I retained the words, their formations and transformations in my ear and in my mind, and I employed the language with ease for writing and talking."<sup>1</sup>

In giving the pupil English sentences to translate into the foreign language, we are only artificially creating difficulties. If it is difficult for the pupil to translate into his mother-tongue where at least confirmed habit ought to prevent him from falling into the worst pitfalls, then it must be much more difficult, indeed impossible, to translate into

<sup>1</sup> *Aus meinem Leben*, II. vi. 'Goethes Werke, Cotta'sche bibl. d. Weltliteratur, 20. 218.

a foreign language where he is not yet quite at home. We ourselves lead the pupil to make mistakes, and then we have to do all we can to prevent his confronting us with a too overwhelming number of them. To this end we limit each exercise to illustrating one, or two, or three, paragraphs in the grammar ; we make theoretical rules to serve as a guide in translating, without always remembering how difficult it is to make practical use of such rules ; we bracket the words which are not to be translated ; we try to be helpful by placing alongside of, or underneath, the correct English, some very strange English indeed, which, however, has the advantage that it can be translated literally, etc., etc. And the result of all this exertion ? Well, it is a well known fact that they are not always things of beauty that we meet with in the French exercises which are handed in after many years of toil, according to this method. Experience is sure to teach us that this is not the means to our end. Joh. Storm is right when he says (*Franske taleövelser*, Preface) : "The worst and most unfruitful torment in the school instruction of the present time is the excessive use of written exercises in foreign languages." As a bright contrast to this "constructive" method of procedure, we have the "imitative" method, which may be so called partly because it is an imitation of the way in which a child learns his native language, partly because it depends upon that invaluable faculty, the natural imitative instinct of the pupils, to give them the proper linguistic feeling, if it only has ample opportunity to come into play. As a motto for this method, we might perhaps say : Away with lists and rules. Practise what is right again and again !

## IX

"BUT our pupils must not only know their foreign languages unconsciously and mechanically; they must not only learn how to express themselves, but they must also know why." When I think of the instruction in grammar that has been usual hitherto, I am tempted to say as if in echo, "Why?"

In a school in Copenhagen, the story goes that a certain teacher after having asked about the gender of the French substantive *mort* and then "Why?" got the answer, "Because it comes from Latin *mors*, which is feminine"; he was not satisfied with that, however, but made the correction: "No, it is because it is an exception." When we feel scandalized at this teacher's stupidity, we ought conscientiously to ask ourselves if many of the answers given to the question "Why?" in grammar teaching are in reality much more valuable than this one; the object in most cases is merely to classify the sentences or words under certain given rubrics and to give their names and the respective rules which have been committed to memory, something which can in large part be done with very little real grammatical understanding of the language in question.

The usual superstition that theoretical instruction in

grammar is the best way to teach pupils how to express themselves grammatically is of a piece with the severity with which grammatical mistakes are criticized in comparison with the mildness with which mistakes of vocabulary, etc., are treated.

That grammatical propositions are abstractions, which are often difficult even for experts to understand, and which must therefore be far beyond the horizon of our pupils, we see from the way in which most philologists, on coming across a rule which is the least bit involved, immediately have to resort to the examples to see what the point is ; we also see it from the difficulty which grammarians often find in expressing their rules in such a way as to be really clear. Therefore there is even among persons who have to any extent studied languages theoretically (and perhaps most among them) a great tendency to avoid as much as possible the traditional, grammatical, theoretical method when they want to take up a new language; this feeling has been clearly expressed by the renowned Romance scholar H. Schuchardt.<sup>1</sup> It is true, as has been said, that one really cannot begin to learn the grammar of a language until one knows the language itself.

In contrast to our school-days, when in all subjects a ready-made system was pounded into us, and it was only through the system that we caught sight of some of the facts upon which it was built, so that we indulged in only

<sup>1</sup> Obwohl ich mich seit geraumer zeit mit der theorie der sprachen beschäftige, hege ich noch heutzutage eine abneigung gegen die systematischen sprachlehren.—*Auf anlass des volapiëks.* Berlin, 1888, p. 38.

extremely little of anything like independent observation or classification of observations, in contrast to all this, another method of procedure is coming to the front in all teaching, a method which starts out from the things which the child itself can see in its surroundings, a method which trains the child to observe, to classify its observations, to draw its own conclusions, so that finally, when the time is ripe, the scientific system will raise itself, as it were, in a natural way on the foundation of the observations made. The golden rule is: "Never tell the children anything that they can find out for themselves."

Theoretical grammar ought not to be taken up too early, and when it is taken up it is not well to do it in such a way that the pupil is given ready-made paradigms and rules. After the manner of Spencer's "Inventional Geometry," where the pupil is all the way through led to find out the propositions and proofs for himself, we ought to get an *Inventional Grammar*. When a selection in the reader has been read, the pupils may be asked to go through it again (read it aloud), and pay special attention, for instance, to the personal pronouns; every time one occurs, it is to be written down on the blackboard; there the forms are finally classified (by the pupils!) according to the natural associations between them, and thus the paradigms are constructed quite naturally; then, if desired, the pupils can copy them down in special note-books for future reference. For instance, if the French possessive pronoun is found in the two forms *son* and *sa*, in the combinations *sa main*, *son gant*, *son épée*, *son ennemi*, *sa figure*, *sa blessure*, *son opinion*, the object of the pupils must be to discover

the principle of usage. It will not be found difficult to formulate a rule in these cases ; but, if necessary, the teacher can help the pupils not a little by means of the emphasis with which he reads the sentences in which the forms are found. Then the rule once formulated may be tested on other forms to see if the same principle of usage should happen to apply there too, etc.

Of course the teacher must decide beforehand<sup>1</sup> what points of grammar a certain text is especially fitted to illustrate in this manner. Yet it is not necessary for all the forms which it is desired to group together to occur in the piece which is being examined ; if there are any empty spaces in the paradigms, the pupils will of their own accord desire to get them filled out, and they will thus have an opportunity to learn something new. It will also frequently happen that the missing forms are already familiar to the pupils from previous reading ; in that case, if the pupils themselves do not happen to think of them, the teacher can easily give them a clue by saying the beginning of the sentence in which they occur.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If the text-book itself does not recommend certain exercises for each piece.

<sup>2</sup> On the whole teachers who read connected pieces with their pupils in the thorough manner which I have suggested, will be surprised at the strong powers of association produced by successiveness ; one word always recalls the whole context in which it has been learned. In one of the exercises given by Walter, pupil A mentions one of the words which the class has had and then the name of pupil B, who is thereupon expected to give the whole sentence in which the word occurs. Of course this can be done now and then by way of recreation ; as a rule it is not necessary. This new method of always learning and remembering the words in their natural context may be compared to the newest methods in natural history teaching, according to which the pupils

It follows as a matter of course that only the most elementary things can be so examined in a text of one or two pages that grammatical rules or a tolerably adequate paradigm can be formulated. In dealing with beginners the teacher must not be too ambitious to get, for instance, all the forms of a verb collected in that manner, at all events not all at once; it is not necessary; one tense at a time is quite sufficient. And of course one must not be such a slave of traditional grammatical systems, that one necessarily must go all the way through one class of words before beginning another, etc. There is no reason why these bits of system should not be taken up quite unsystematically, one day a little about pronouns, another day the present tense of verbs, a third day the comparison of adjectives, etc., all according to what comes natural, or what the texts give occasion for.<sup>1</sup> And it will not matter if some time is allowed to pass between these exercises. One of the abominations of the old method of instruction was that the teacher, as a Swedish author has expressed it, considered it his duty on all occasions to feel the grammatical pulse of the pupils.

must see the animals and plants as they are at home in their natural surroundings, acted upon by them and in turn acting upon them.

<sup>1</sup> Each phenomenon which is taken up should, however, be treated to the end with as much thoroughness as is possible at *that* stand-point. Grammar ought not to be taken up during the lesson merely as a matter of secondary importance, subordinated to other exercises, whose object is to help the pupils to understand the text, or to develop their practical skill in the language. If the teacher does not want to devote a whole hour to the grammar, he can at least draw a sharp line between these exercises in theory and the other exercises. One thing at a time, and that done well!

A teacher in English can, at a rather early stage, set to work in this way to examine and formulate the use of English *do* as an auxiliary verb. A rather long piece which has been read is assigned to the pupils in parts, so that A and B get the first page, C and D the next, etc., and they are to find and note down all the cases which occur. Then the cases found are gone through in the class in such a way that the teacher first requires all those sentences to be read aloud where *do* occurs and there is no negation. After some sentences have been read, he may ask what they have in common ; if no one answers, more sentences may be taken until someone discovers that all the sentences are interrogative, and then this discovery may be tested in the following sentences. Thereupon the negative sentences which were before omitted are gone through. Is it then necessary to have *do* in all questions, and in all negative sentences ? Well, go through the same pages again for next time and note down all the cases of interrogative and negative sentences where *do* does not occur. Then in the next lesson we shall finally be able to formulate the rules. This takes longer than to learn the rule in a grammar. Yes, but then we may also be certain that it will be far better understood and remembered, to say nothing of the pleasure it always gives to discover something oneself ; it has all of it been a little preliminary practice in scientific methods of research and drawing of conclusions. And then—what I always return to—the whole exercise has also been a review of a number of sentences, and there is not much danger that the pupils will forget the words, turns of expression and

grammatical relations which they have become intimate with in this manner.

Even if we do not attain to any results that can stand comparison with the rules in our text-books, yet such lessons in grammatical observation and systematization are none the less valuable. For instance, the last three or four days' German lesson may be gone through with special attention given to the gender. One pupil reads aloud; every time he comes to a substantive, he mentions one of his class-mates (or the teacher motions to one of them), who is to give the gender,<sup>1</sup> as well as the reasons for his inference (the form of the article in *in der kirche*, the termination of the adjective in *ein schönes mädchen*, etc.); one of the boys stands at the blackboard, which is divided into three columns, and writes down each word in the right column, after its gender is determined. When the form or the context does not show the gender, the teacher asks if the word is familiar from previous passages, and if the gender could be seen there; otherwise the teacher will have to say what gender it is. At last (toward the end of the lesson, or when the blackboard is full), all the words are repeated together with the article; then, if it seems fit, the teacher may examine one or another pupil, letting him stand with his back to the blackboard. If there are, for instance, two or three words ending in *ung* or *schaft* or some other absolutely certain ending, the pupils may be asked to recall other words with the same ending, and then formulate the

<sup>1</sup> Or when a period is reached, he may give all the substantives which he has found one at a time—the rest as above. The advantage of this is that the connexion is kept intact.

rule for themselves. A few hours employed in this manner will surely bear much more fruit than if all the long rules for gender with their exceptions and exceptions to exceptions were committed to memory ; the attention is roused and the powers of observation are sharpened, so that the pupils will also in the future take note of the gender of new words, when there is anything to indicate it, especially since it is necessary for them to know the gender of the words which they need in the conversation and transposition exercises already described in this book.

Difficult, especially syntactical, phenomena which do not occur very frequently, cannot be treated exactly in this way, but some of them may be taken up in an analogical manner. During the going over of a large section of the French reader, the attention may, for instance, be directed to the subjunctive, so that each subjunctive form is either written down in a notebook or marked in the margin of the reader ; after one or two weeks or so, all these sentences may be collected and arranged in large groups. During the next week, similar cases are frequently met with, and the pupil is given an opportunity to recall his recent observations, and perhaps supplement them by newly discovered varieties of subjunctive clauses, etc. But it must be continually borne in mind that much of what is found in grammars is really of no value except to the philological specialist, and should never be learned by schoolboys.

A systematical grammar is not superfluous except in the first stage. Later on its examples may be used to supplement those collected in the course of the reading ; the teacher can, for instance, read them aloud, make sure that

they are understood, and use them to help the pupils to find out the rule. Then, when the pupils have formulated the rule as well as they can, it may be read as rendered in the grammar. To go through the grammar from one end to the other, a section at a time, ought not to be undertaken until most of the phenomena have been treated in connexion with the reading ; it will then be both easier and more interesting than if taken up earlier ; its chief use will then be to fill out and confirm what has already been learned.<sup>1</sup>

If grammar is taught in this way, the pupils will not get that feeling which they now so frequently have, that they are just learning a series of arbitrarily prescribed instructions as to how they are to avoid making mistakes and getting "poor marks" in their written exercises ; they are more apt to conceive of it as something to be compared to the laws of nature, those general comprehensive observations of what takes place under certain conditions ; for grammar is made up of observations of the manner in which the natives express themselves. The pupils no longer say to themselves : "We *must* have the subjunctive in purpose clauses for it stands in § 235," but "we find the subjunctive in all purpose clauses." The teacher's chief task is to give the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sweet tries to throw ridicule on my suggestion as to *inventional grammar* (*The Practical Study of Languages*, 1899, p. 115-116) ; he seems to forget the distinction between independent grammatical research and teaching in schools ; and when he speaks about the boys having to sort "a hundredweight or so of slips," I think his exaggeration needs no further refutation than the above statements which are nothing but an amplification of what I wrote in 1886. Fortunately, on p. 117, Dr. Sweet recommends practically the same course as is outlined here, only carried out to a less extent.

pupils insight into the construction of the foreign language, into its peculiarities and the chief points in which it deviates from other languages. As a rule, text-books dwell too much on details, and often neglect very important features, such as for instance the great freedom allowed in English in the use of substantives as verbs and vice-versâ, the different part played by order of words in the different languages, the cause and effect relationship between a fixed order of words and paucity of case-endings, etc.

The usual arrangement of grammatical material is not as shrewd as it might be. The sharp division between accident and syntax as we find it in most of our text-books is, from a scientific point of view, untenable and impracticable<sup>1</sup>; from a pedagogical point of view it is unfortunate, because it separates form and function, which ought to be learned together, just as well as a word's exterior (its sounds and spelling), and its meaning are learned together.<sup>2</sup> And within each of these two parts of the grammar, the usual order of procedure depends upon a meaningless order of precedence between the classes of words, whereby the adverbs are placed about as far as possible from the adjectives, though if there are any two classes of words which ought to belong together, they are these two, which have comparison in common. In the

<sup>1</sup> The French superlative is a purely syntactical, the comparative, a mixed phenomenon.

<sup>2</sup> I have treated accident and syntax together in my own little English grammar (*Kortfattet engelsk grammatik for tale- og skriftsproget*, Copenhagen, 1st edition 1885, 4th ed. 1903).

case of the verbs, those things are often grouped together which belong together lexically but not grammatically.<sup>1</sup>

The translation-method is injurious here too, because it veils contours which ought to be sharp. For instance, the pupils will not get the proper conception of gender and its relation to expressions for sex, if *er* referring to *der hut* and *sie* referring to *die bank*, and likewise *il* referring to *le chapeau*, and *elle* referring to *la chaise*, are all translated by the English *it*, while the same pronouns, when used about persons, are translated by *he* and *she*.

Comparisons between the languages which the pupils know, for the purpose of showing their differences of economy in the use of linguistic means of expression, will only be a natural outcome of this systematized occupation with the theory of the language, and may often become very interesting, especially for advanced students. (Comparisons between the reflexive pronouns in the different languages ; *du ihr Sie sie*—*toi vous vous ils elles eux*—*you you you they*—*il y a, es giebt, there is, etc.*). The teacher may call attention to the inconsistency of the languages ; what is distinctly expressed in one case is in another case not designated by any outward sign (*haus häuser* ; *häuschen häuschen*—*house houses* ; *sheep sheep*—*cheval chevaux* ; *vers vers*—*yes in reality also maison, maisons, etc.* ; *mech mir, dich dir, sich sich* ; *der mann, die frau, das weib* ; *ein guter mann, eine gute frau, ein gutes weib* ; *der gute mann, die gute frau, das*

<sup>1</sup> With reference to grammatical systematization, I may refer to my preliminary remarks in *Progress in Language* (London, Sonnen-schein 894), p. 138 ff.

gute weib; die männer, die frauen, die weiber; die guten m., f., w., etc.). In French and English, there is ample occasion to point out how differently the grammatical relations present themselves in sound and on paper (singular and plural alike in bon bons, beau beaux, hideux hideux, further amer amère, clair claire, révolutionnaire révolutionnaire | church churches, judgejudges | sin sinned, fine fined | say said, lay laid, etc.). That this may be a good way to make a beginning in comparative philology scarcely needs further proof; many things belonging to this field of study can be understood by our advanced pupils, and ought to belong to a good general education. Everyone who has received a little more than the most ordinary school education ought to understand what is meant by the relationship and development of languages; he ought to be acquainted with such linguistic phenomena as the loss of sounds, assimilation, analogical formations, differentiations, etc.; he ought to have noticed examples of these phenomena, both in his mother tongue and in the foreign languages which he has learned, just as he ought to realize how these processes continually influence the whole construction of the languages, and, in the course of time, have produced such great differences as those he sees between German and English, or between Latin and French; a valuable point of departure would be to take up the fate of French loan-words in English with the frequent retention of the old French sounds (*ch* in *chase*, *j* in *journal*, *n* in *cousin* *cousine*, *s* in *beast*, *feast*, etc.). But however interesting and valuable these things are, it is scarcely advisable to devote too much time to them as long as the living lan-

guages have so few hours at their disposal. How much or how little of this sort of thing the teacher takes up will also, to a great extent, depend upon whether the class on the whole is ripe for it, and if the pupils show sufficient interest and desire to ask questions ; very much philology ought not to be *forced* upon them.

Exercises in systematization need not be limited to the field of grammar ; the lexical side of the language may also be taken up in a similar manner, even if to a less extent. Several methods of reviewing vocabulary have been mentioned above, but there are still more ways ; for instance the teacher may give the pupil a certain subject (the human body, war, a railway journey) about which he is to collect all the words and expressions which he can remember—or which occurred in the last narrative read—and he may also arrange them in various subdivisions. This can best be done in the form of a written exercise.

The pupils may also be set to separate a complex event or series of actions, etc., into its single component parts. For instance, they may describe the process of getting dressed in all its details, or the way to school in the morning. The more detailed the pupils can make their descriptions, the better ; they thus get use for a number not only of substantives but especially of verbs in their natural connection, which they see before them in their "mind's eye"—but I scarcely think that Gouin's ideas<sup>1</sup> ought to be used for more than such occasional series.

<sup>1</sup> I am tempted here to enlarge upon Gouin's method of teaching languages, but I have neither the space, nor exactly the desire, to do so, since I have never seen it carried out in practice. I can refer to

Advanced students may also be instructed in a systematic collecting of the most important synonyms. Each one should have a special note-book for the purpose, where a whole page is given to each group of synonyms which the teacher wants them to treat ; on this page they write down all those sentences where they come across the word in question. Now and then the teacher and the class together may examine all the sentences which have been collected and try to establish the difference between the synonyms on the basis of the examples found. Of especial value are of course those sentences where several synonyms occur directly after each other (How much of *history* we have in the *story* of Arthur is doubtful. What is not very thrilling as *story* may be of profound interest as *history*. Half a *loaf* is better than no *bread*. A nice little *loaf* of brown *bread*). It will also be of interest occasionally to draw up comparative tabular lists from different languages as for instance—

mensch	man	homme
mann	man	homme
mann	husband	mari

to which remarks may be added about the use of *human being* and *individu* when indication of sex is to be avoided. Furthermore—

weib	woman	femme
weib, frau	wife	femme

R. Kron's (certainly too enthusiastic) description (*Die neueren sprachen*, III, also published separately), and to Brekke's (for me absolutely convincing) criticism : "Indberetning om en stipendiarejse til England for at studere Gouins metode for undervisning i sprog" (Quousque Tandem No. = Norske univ. og skoleannaler, 1894).

frau	lady	dame
frau	Mrs.	madame
dame	lady	dame
baum	tree	arbre
holz	wood	bois
wald	wood, forest	bois, forêt

Such tables will do more than long explanations to illustrate the differences between the languages, and to show how often words are ambiguous and vague in meaning. It is evident, however, that many of the subtle and fanciful indications of shades of meaning found in the dictionaries of synonyms are entirely beyond the grasp of ordinary pupils.

Dr. Walter, in Frankfurt, has still another way of furthering his pupils' familiarity with the resources of the foreign language ; he dictates some of the sentences from what has been read, and lets the pupils themselves find as many different ways as possible of expressing the same thought. I shall reprint one of the sentences from his book, together with the pupils' variants (marked with letters) ; they were written down in the course of 25 minutes : "ohne vorausgegangene besprechung" (in the second year of instruction, with, so far as I know, six hours a week) ; as will be seen, the variations are rather considerable.

*The advantage of the English ships lay not in bulk, but in construction.*

- a. The English were overwhelming, not by the size of the ships, but their power lay in the construction of the ships.
- b. In construction, not in bulk, lay the advantage of the English ships.

- c. The English ships were superior to the Spanish not in bulk, but in construction.
- d. The advantage of the English fleet (squadron) consisted not in bulk, but in construction.
- e. The advantage of the English was the light construction of their ships.
- f. The English had not large ships, but they were better constructed.
- g. The power of the vessels of the English was not caused by the extent, but by the construction of the ships.
- h. The English men-of-war could do very much against the enemy, because they were well constructed, and not too large.
- i. The English vessels were not large, but well constructed.
- k. The advantage of the English men-of-war did not consist in size, but in construction.
- l. The advantage of the English men-of-war was to be found in their construction.

I have myself, in teaching advanced pupils, in a similar way, let them re-write a half a page or so of a historical work. It has always interested them, and the comparison of the results, which often presented the most varied expressions for the same thought, was always very instructive.

Parallel with the reading of a grammar as a supplement to, and a summary of all the grammatical knowledge which has been gained in the ways suggested, it might seem to be a good plan to go through a systematical collection of the

lexical material—of course not an ordinary dictionary, since the alphabetical arrangement is about as unsystematical as possible, but a sensibly arranged vocabulary, something in the line of Roget's *Thesaurus*. But it ought, at any rate, to be much smaller, and only include words and expressions which are actually necessary; even then, however, the unavoidable dryness of such a book, and the absence of connection between the single words, would make it unfit for use in teaching, even if it were not to be employed in imparting new material, but only to recall words which have already been learned. It would be better worth while for pupils, who have reached a somewhat advanced stage, to go through a little systematic collection of phrases, especially of such turns of expression as play a great part in ordinary daily intercourse, but which are seldom met with in literature. Franke's *Phrases de tous les jours* is the best specimen I know of—but I have it from the very best source that this little book was never intended as a text-book for beginners.

## X

HERE, last but not least, comes the treatment of the *pronunciation*, which for several reasons I have not taken up first, although the questions which are here to be discussed necessarily play a part already from the very first lesson in a foreign language. I have now for many years advocated the use of phonetics—yes, even of phonetical transcription, in the teaching of foreign languages, and have to a large extent put my theories into practice both in dealing with children of all ages and with grown persons. New things always frighten people; they think with terror that here the pupils are to be burdened with an entirely new and difficult science and with a new kind of writing; we had trouble enough with the old kind, they say, and now we are to be bothered with this new alphabet with its barbarous letters! Every educator must see how objectionable it is; now we have learned languages for so many years without such modern inventions, and the old way ought to be good enough for us still.

That is about the run of the objections raised. This the answer: Phonetics is a science, to be sure, and, like all other sciences, it is not without its difficult and mooted points. Yet the fact that large volumes can be written

about botany does not frighten us from teaching our children *some* botany. In mathematics there are many things which are beyond the comprehension of ordinary school-children, but yet they have to learn *some* mathematics. Phonetics is not a new study that we want to add to the school curriculum; we only want to take as much of the science as will really be a positive help in learning something which has to be learned *anyway*. We must remember what science is, and what part it plays. Of course in our days every science collects more and more material and requires more and more specialization, so that parts of it become quite inaccessible for all persons except the specialists themselves; but the whole idea of science is that it shall be *unified knowledge* (Spencer), a summing up of all the numerous details of reality under large, comprehensive points of view, the establishing of great, general laws, which apply to all single cases. That is also why science can be termed "ökonomie des denkens," and that is why science can suggest means of facilitating thought and the acquirement of knowledge. We want to have some phonetics introduced into our schools, because theory has convinced us, and experiment has proved to us, that by means of this science we can, with decidedly greater certainty, and in an essentially easier way, give an absolutely better pronunciation in a much shorter space of time than would be possible without phonetics.

And as for that hobgoblin called phonetical transcription—well, it is no "new alphabet," not even as new as the Gothic (German) letters are, and much less so

than the Greek alphabet, with which the pupils are burdened (without their being of the slightest use<sup>1</sup>), to say nothing of the new names for the letters. In learning Greek the pupils have to operate with thirty odd new symbols ; in our phonetical transcription for school use, we do not need more than from five to eight new symbols for each language ; otherwise it consists of the ordinary letters, and every letter in it retains one of its familiar values, which is used consistently everywhere, the new symbols being mostly modifications of the known letters ; *ſ* reminds us of *s*, *ȝ* of *z*, *ɛ* and *ə* of *e*, *η* of *n*. The whole thing is no worse than that.

If you refer to your experience in opposition to these new ways of teaching, you only invite the answer : Yes, your experience shows how a *poor* pronunciation may be learned !

Why must we learn how to pronounce the foreign languages at all ? Well, in the first place, it must be because there is the possibility that we may meet natives some time later. Otherwise we might, perhaps, be satisfied with *reading* the foreign words according to English principles of pronunciation, French *pain* like English "pain," *Werther* as "worth her," etc. I have known old parsons who have taught themselves English so as to be able to read novels, and who read English with Danish vowels, pronounced the *k* in *knight*, etc. For a superficial "getting the gist" of shilling shockers and penny

<sup>1</sup> Greek could just as well be read with Latin letters, for they are almost as much like the letters which Demosthenes used as the late black-letters are which we print as Greek.

dreadfuls, this is sufficient perhaps, but I maintain that for a penetrating, delicate comprehension of real works of literature this manner of reading is not enough. Language cannot be separated from sound, and that is the sum of the matter ; only he who hears the foreign language within himself in exactly or approximately the same way as a native hears it can really appreciate and enjoy not only poetry, where phonetic effects must needs always play an important part, but also all the higher forms of prose. Then there is the mnemonic benefit of a correct pronunciation. It helps the pupil to keep foreign languages distinct from each other ; for instance, he will never be misled to think that *jeune* means "pretty" on account of its resemblance to *schön*, and he will not be apt to confuse French *joli*, *journée*, *nouvelle* with English *jolly*, *journey*, *novel*. In the second place, Madvig is right—and this applies to the living languages too—when he writes : "Finally there is scarcely any doubt that progress in the dead languages would become more rapid if, so far as possible, for instance, through reading and pronouncing distinctly and through memorizing new expressions, the language came not only through the eye, but more through the ear than it does in most places now."

Our pronunciation according to the old school is extremely poor, indeed, much more frightful than most people imagine. It has among others these two disadvantages, that we do not understand the natives, and that we are not understood by them.

The very first lesson in a foreign language ought to be devoted to initiating the pupils into the world of sounds ;

if the class has already had such an elementary course in sounds, either in connection with the study of their mother tongue (something we ought to come to in the course of time at any rate), or in connection with another foreign language, it can of course be made briefer ; it is scarcely safe to omit it entirely. The conversation may be formed as simply as the following one, where all scientific terms are avoided ; not even the word "organ" is necessary. (Of course the answers will not always be as prompt and decided as here, and much will need to be repeated several times with different pupils.)

Teacher : John, can you say *papa*? *Papa*.—How do you go about it? Say it once more.—*Papa*. First, I open my mouth, and then I open it once again.—Yes, and in the meantime you must, of course, have closed it. Look at me, all of you, and see if I too go about it in that way—*Papa*. What did I do, William?—First you opened your mouth, then closed it, then opened it again.—What did I close it with?—With the lips.—Now, when I say *op*, *ap*, *ep*, what do I do?—Close the lips every time, and then open them again.—Then I do that every time I say *p*. Robert, can you find any other sounds where I also close my lips? No.—Try the word *mama*.—Yes, in *m*.—Now, say *baby* and *bib*.—Also in *b*.—Good ; then we have three sounds now where the lips are closed, *p*, *b*, *m*. Let us write them in a row on the blackboard. Is it necessary to close the lips in all sounds?—No.—What is your name?—John Gordon Hunter.—All of you look at him while he says it. John Gordon Hunter.—Did he close his lips at all? No.—Then all the sounds which are in the whole of his name

must be said with other parts of the mouth than the lips. What else have we that we use to speak with?—The tongue.—Now, when we say *n*, for instance, in *John*, *Anna*, what do we do?—Close with the tongue behind the teeth.—What part of the tongue?—The point.—Now try *t* in *atta*.—There we also close with the point of the tongue behind the teeth. And *d* in *adda*.—Likewise.—Then we use the point of the tongue for *t*, *d*, *n*. Let us write them down under *p*, *b*, *m*. Now *k* in *akka*?—Look into my mouth. What do I do?—You close with the tongue farther back in the mouth.—Yes, we call that the back of the tongue. Howard, look into Edward's mouth while he says *akka*. Now *g* in *agga* (the sound *g*, of course, not the name *dʒi* of the letter). Then we can write them down in a third row. *p*, *b*, *m* were what kind of sounds?—Lip-sounds.—And *t*, *d*, *n*, were what kind? Point-of-the-tongue sounds.—And the third row?—Back-of-the-tongue sounds.—Yes, we might also say simply point-sounds and back-sounds. [Here some one will ask]: Why are there not three there? Yes, there are three sounds there too, but we have no letter for the third. Say *tinker*, and then *tin-kettle*. Is there no difference? Yes, in *tin-kettle* we have a pure *n*, but not in *tinker*; here we have another sound before *k*.—Now try *finger*.—There we have the same before *g*.—And in *singer*?—The same without a real *g*.—Look into my mouth when I say (s)inger [without *s*]. We can make a letter for this new sound by writing an *n*, with the last stroke lengthened below the line and slightly curled, as in *g*: *ŋ*.—James, come up here and write down the four words as they sound, making use of the new letter.—(He writes first *tin*.

*kettle*).—No, do you hear more than one *t*? and can you hear any *e* after *t*?—No.—What then? *tinketl*. (It is not worth while at this stage to require greater phonetical exactness than *tinketl*, *tinker*, *finger*, *singer*, passing over the fact that the final *er* in the words does not really sound like *e + r*). You see, if you were a Frenchman trying to learn English, you would not know that *n* in *tin-kettle* and in the other words were different sounds, and that the *e* was silent, and you would pronounce the words incorrectly; but if the one were written *tinketl* and the other *tinker*, it would be much easier for you to learn how to pronounce them. And then take *fringe*; it looks as if it were simply *finger* with the *r* in another place, and yet it is quite a different sound, so we see that the two letters *ng* may stand for three entirely different sounds. We also write *knight*, and say “nait”; we write *busy* and say “bizi.” Can you find any other words which we spell differently from the way in which we pronounce them? [Various examples are found and analyzed.] When we write the words exactly as they sound, we call it *phonetical transcription*. Now, in the beginning, we shall write all French words phonetically, so that you can more easily learn how to pronounce them. But you saw in the case of *tinker* that we occasionally need a new symbol in this transcription, which we do not use otherwise. You will learn a few more of them in the course of time. . . . Then we have seen that in order to say different sounds, we can use the lips and the point of the tongue and the back of the tongue. Is there nothing else that we need to speak with?—The nose? Yes, that is all right in a way, but—can you move your nose? Look at

my nose ; do I move it when I speak ?—No.—But is it not possible to use it without moving it ? Now, see if I use my nose when I say a…… [very long drawn out].<sup>1</sup> Now, I suddenly hold my nose with two fingers, and press the nostrils together. Does that make the sound different ?—No.—But now I say m in the same way m…… and pinch the nostrils together in the same way. Did anything happen ?—Yes, there was no sound.—Now you can try it yourselves. First you, George ; say a……, and then the boy next to you can suddenly pinch your nose together with two fingers. And then say m……, and let Fred pinch your nose again. Can you say m while your nostrils are closed ?—No, at any rate the sound soon disappears. All of you try it ; say a just as long as I do, and pinch the nose together several times with your fingers whenever you see me do it ; and now likewise with m. That is because the air has to escape through the nose in order that the sound m may be made. It is the soft palate that you use in order to open the inner entrance to the nose, so that the air can escape through the nostrils. You can feel the palate behind the teeth, there it is hard ; but if you pass your fingers farther back, you will soon feel that it becomes soft and flexible. See how it can go up and down in my mouth. Look in the mirror<sup>2</sup>, and see how your own palate is. First try breathing in and out silently, and then say a ; then you will see how your soft palate suddenly jumps up ;

<sup>1</sup> A dot after the letter and above the line is the best indication of length. a is here taken phonetically, the vowel in arm.

<sup>2</sup> A hand-mirror is a useful thing to have in these preliminary phonetical exercises. In several places, the teacher requires each pupil to bring his own along

that is because it has to close the entrance to the nose, so that no air can get out that way. But when you say *m* it remains hanging down, so that the air can come out through the nose, the passage through the mouth being closed by the lips. [At this point, you might make a rough sketch on the blackboard, showing a cross-section through the mouth, with the soft palate in the two positions.] In producing *n* and *ŋ*, you have the same position of the soft palate as in the case of *m*. [Try to pinch the nose together.]

Now we have seen how we use the nose and the mouth when we speak, but are they the only things that are necessary in speaking? [If the pupils cannot think of "voice" of their own accord, the teacher may put them on the track by saying: when someone speaks (or sings) very well, we say that he has a good... ]—Voice.—Where is the voice?—In the vocal chords.—And where are they?—In Adam's apple.—[Here it might be a good thing not to despise the anecdote about the apple which stuck in Adam's throat.] Now we also call that the larynx. In there, there are two vocal chords stretched parallel to each other, and when they vibrate a tone is produced, and that is what we call voice. It is just as when a string of a violin is brought into vibration and gives forth a tone; or a bell or a wine-glass, which is made to quiver violently. Now do we always use the voice when we speak? You do not know; well, then we can experiment. [Whisper a sentence.] Did I use my voice then?—No.—Now try first to say an *a*... quite loudly and forcibly (or sing it), and take firm hold of Adam's apple with your thumb and forefinger; then you will feel it

quiver. Have you never tried to touch a piano with your finger tips while someone was playing on it? Then you will have felt the same kind of delicate, rapid, quivering movements as you feel on touching the larynx while the voice is in activity. In both cases you can *feel* those movements with your fingers which you *hear* with your ear as a tone. But now whisper an a... and feel your larynx; do you feel anything?—No, there are no vibrations.—And try to say s... [by no means the name of the letter, *es*, but the hissing sound itself.] Is there voice in that? Do you feel any vibration?—No.—Then s is a *voiceless* sound, but a is a *voiced* sound. Now, try m... [not *em*!] Is it voiced? and n...? Notice that you can sing the voiced sounds [test several of them], but not the voiceless sounds.<sup>1</sup> That f... is voiceless, and that v... (with strong buzzing!) is voiced, is easily discovered. In the same way, we have for every voiceless sound a corresponding voiced sound. Say s..., and now produce the corresponding voiced sound with the buzzing element. They are the sounds we have in *so* and *zoo*, *seal* and *zebra*. We have also a third corresponding pair f and v; f is the sound in *shilling*, *shall*, etc.; v is the sound in *measure*, *pleasure*, etc. Then we may write down:

f	s	v	voiceless
		z	voiced.

Now pronounce each sound in chorus as I point to the letter, and continue drawing it out until I take the chalk

<sup>1</sup> Here also the experiment in hearing the voice distinctly by holding the hands flat against the ears.

away from the letter.<sup>1</sup> Thereupon the pupils may be tested singly, the teacher skipping from one sound to the other. Exercises may also be given with the consonants between two vowels: afffa, avvva, asssa, azzza; afa, ava, asa, aza.

Now the pupils have already had a little course in elementary phonetics; it interests them and contains nothing that they cannot understand, and nothing that is not useful for them. Nor does it ever really frighten the children; but the very thought of it has actually frightened a number of older teachers, who apparently live in holy terror of trespassing beyond the lines laid out for them in their childhood, and who unfailingly think that everything new must be just as useless, dry and pedantical as most of what they learned in their own schooldays, so they are not inclined to have the bother of making themselves familiar with anything new.<sup>2</sup> In the Danish original of this book, I reprinted as a curiosity a description of the activity of the organs of speech in the production of speech-sounds, which a boy 14 years old, who had never been told anything about the formation of sounds, had written all by himself, without the least instruction or help of any kind (which can easily be seen, among other things, from the fact that he

<sup>1</sup> I have often also conducted the exercise in such a way that the class had to voice the sound when I raised my hand, and unvoice it when I lowered my hand; thus I have made them articulate fffvvvffff, ssszzsss, etc., without any pauses.

<sup>2</sup> That I am not exaggerating (as people certainly will suspect in about ten years from now), I could easily prove by means of a long series of opinions from pedagogical meetings, articles in pedagogical periodicals, newspaper reviews, etc.

sticks to and analyzes the names of the letters); it shows that this dreaded phonetical science is not so terribly far beyond the horizon of ordinary children after all.

The children always "follow" the teacher so well in these phonetical exercises that it is rather necessary to put a damper on their eagerness to try to produce the sounds than to spur them on. Or, in other words, the teacher has but to organize their natural impulse to imitate the sounds by saying to them, when they begin to whistle and hum: "You may say the sounds yourselves directly, just wait a moment," and thereupon, after the explanation has been given, by allowing them ample opportunity to pronounce the sounds, both in chorus and singly. Then, both during recess and at home, they will revel to their hearts' content in the new sounds, and the whole new and amusing world that has been opened to them.

After the introductory course which I have just sketched,<sup>1</sup> I immediately begin with texts in the foreign language. If the teacher will at this point read one or two pages aloud rapidly (or give a little talk) in as characteristically a French or German manner as possible, this is a very good way to give the pupils a preliminary notion of the foreignness of the new language. This impression may be further emphasized by means of a little trick which I may recommend. The teacher practises an English sentence pronounced as a Frenchman (or German respectively) would

<sup>1</sup> I have sometimes made the introduction longer, sometimes shorter than here indicated; some teachers make it more complete, so that they get a whole system of sounds tabulated before they pass on to the reading.

pronounce it, with French vowels, French accent, etc. He may refer to this sentence now and then in speaking of the single sounds, and it will serve to warn the students against the kind of mistakes that they themselves are to avoid. Then I take up the new sounds in the more accidental order in which they occur in the selection for reading; I repeat every word, together with its meaning, write it down on the blackboard in phonetical transcription, and explain every symbol as it occurs, at the same time articulating the corresponding sound *isolated* (this is of great importance! also the consonants alone without any vowel, either before or after), and drawing it out very long.<sup>1</sup>

In not a few cases, the pupils will be able to imitate the sound with sufficient exactness, when it has been produced isolated; at all events, they do it far better than when they only hear it among other sounds. But in many other cases their imitation is not successful, or, at least, it is not sure enough to be quite satisfactory; then it is necessary to resort to phonetics for help, on the basis of the introductory course.

Of course, it is not easy for a Dane to give detailed directions for phonetical instruction, as it is to be conducted when an English teacher is teaching English children French or German. Therefore, the following section is necessarily shorter than the corresponding section in the

<sup>1</sup> But stopped consonants, like *p*, *t*, *k*, are exceptions to these instructions to isolate the sounds—every phonetician knows the reason why. They should be uttered with a vowel before and one after, e.g. *ata*.

Danish original, where I could treat the subject exhaustively on the basis of my personal experience, as to how good results are to be obtained. But some few remarks may perhaps serve to point out the right way, and any teacher who has thoroughly mastered the first principles of phonetics theoretically, and especially practically, will himself be able to supplement my suggestions.

In the very first French or German sentence in the reader will probably be found one of the sounds [y] (Fr. *sur*, Ger. *über*), or [ø] (Fr. *veut*, Ger. *höhe*). It is best for these two sounds to be practised together, and, in the beginning, in their long form. As experience shows, it is not sufficient for the teacher merely to say these sounds ; they generally cause English people much trouble, and all imitations based on the diphthong in Eng. *few*, etc., ought to be strictly discountenanced from the very first lesson. That it is not impossible to learn the correct sounds was brought home to me in a striking manner a few years ago. These sounds are also found in Danish ; an English lady who had been in Denmark for some years had not been able, in spite of unceasing efforts, to learn them by imitation. Then I made a bet that I could teach her them in less than ten minutes, and I won the bet through five minutes' theoretical explanation of rounded and unrounded vowels, and two minutes' practical exercises. The directions were about as follows : say [u·] (or [uw]) in *too* very loudly, and hold it as long as you can without taking breath. Once more : observe in the hand-mirror the position of the lips. Then say *tea* [ti·, tij] in the same way ; draw the vowel out until you can hold it no longer ; con-

tinue all the time to observe the position of the lips in the mirror. Now [u···] again; then [i···]. The lips are rounded for some vowels, slit-shaped for others. Try to pout them rather more than you do usually. Pronounce [u···] a couple of times with the lips as rounded and close to each other as possible, and concentrate your attention on the lips. Then say [i···] a couple of times, paying attention to the position of the tongue; you will feel that the sides of the tongue touch the roof of the mouth or the teeth. Now look in the mirror; say [i···] again, and now suddenly, taking care to keep the tongue in the same position, let your lips take the rounded, pouted position they had before. It may be that the pupil is still unable to produce any [y], because, despite the teacher's warning, he involuntarily shifts his tongue-position back again to the familiar [u] position. In that case, however, the teacher must not be discouraged, but pass on to the second part of the experiment, which is surer, and which might therefore have been taken first: place your lips in this pouted [u] position, without producing any sound, look in the mirror, and be very careful that the position of the lips remains unchanged, and then try to say [i···]. If the tongue is placed in the correct [i···]-position, the result cannot be anything but an [y]. This sound is retained and repeated until the pupil is perfectly sure of both the articulation and acoustic effect. Then the sound [ø] may be taken up. It may be produced with [y] as a starting-point, the lower jaw being lowered so that both the underlip and the tongue follow it, while the teacher takes care to stop the downward movement in the right place. The result may be controlled

by starting with [e] and rounding the lips, that is, by going through a process corresponding to the transition from [i···] to [y···].

One of the most unbecoming mistakes which Englishmen make in their pronunciation of foreign languages is their diphthongizing of long vowels, since long vowels,<sup>1</sup> in ordinary English, are pronounced with an upward glide, so that the jaw and the tongue are raised higher in the last part of the vowels in *see*, *two*, *hay*, *know*, for instance, than in the first part. In vulgar London pronunciation, this English peculiarity is carried further, the beginning of the sound being lowered, at all events in the last two sounds mentioned, so that *lace* sounds like *lice*, and *pay* like *pie*. But even if the best pronunciation does not go to this extreme, yet the glide is there, and this glide is for the native Frenchman or German one of the most striking faults in the Englishman's pronunciation of the respective languages, so the Englishman had best be on his guard in this particular. If the teacher, after a little theoretical explanation, says the English [ei] and the German [e] alternately a number of times, even the dullest pupils cannot help but get their ears trained to detect this difference, but long and patient training is certainly necessary, both with the class in chorus and with the pupils singly, before this deeply rooted tendency to diphthongize can be checked.

Another difficulty is met with in the short (narrow) vowels. French *éé* must be pronounced with two short

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the vowels [a·] in *alms*, [ɔ·] in *war*, and [ɔ·] in *sir*.

closed e's; Englishmen have a tendency to pronounce two long or half-long glide-sounds, which begin with a greater distance between the jaws than they ought to, and close with a smaller distance between the jaws than the genuine French sounds have. Anyone who has become accustomed to the undiphthongized long [e], however, can use this as a starting-point for learning the correct short sound, the best way being the frequent repetition of *tétété*... Likewise the short sounds in *fini*, *dodo*, *froufrou*, etc.

Nor do the French nasal vowels occur in English; in phonetical transcription, they are indicated by means of ~ over the vowel-symbol, for instance [ɔ̃] in *son*, etc. Here the teacher must immediately make every effort to check the tendency to say [ɔŋ] as in Eng. *long*, and my experience with Danish pupils has been that it is not sufficient for this purpose merely to let the pupils repeat the sound after me. It is necessary to make it perfectly clear to them wherein the difference consists. First the teacher draws out his [ɔ̃] and establishes (by means of questions that it is only one sound, the same from first to last. Then one of the pupils is to try to draw out the sound [ɔŋ], and it thus becomes clear that it is only the last of the two sounds that is prolonged. On the basis of what has been previously learned (p. 149), the teacher shows the difference of effect caused in closing the nostrils with the fingers, and explains that it is due to the fact that in [ɔŋ] we have first a sound where the air escapes only through the mouth, then another sound where the air only passes out through the nose; but in [ɔ̃], both passages are open at the same time. If a pencil is laid in the mouth so that

it rests on the tongue (tolerably far back), it will remain lying quietly when [ɔ] is pronounced, but not in the case of [ɔŋ]. In connection with [ɔ], the pupils may practise the [ã] sound in *tant*, [ɛ] or, more correctly, [æ], the sound in *teint* and the rounded sound in [œ], *un*. The sound [ɥ] in *tuər* [tɥe], *lui* [lɥi] is easily learned with sufficient exactness as a [y] which is quickly passed over so that the main stress is allowed to fall on the following sound, the relation between [w] and [u] being brought in by way of comparison.

With respect to the consonants, care must be taken to pronounce [t, d, n] in such a way that the point of the tongue touches the upper teeth ; it must, at all events, not be held as far back as in English ; the same applies to [l], where this difference is still more important ; the hollow sound of the English *l* is also to be avoided by keeping the whole tongue more flat and not hollowing it out like a spoon. The voiceless sounds [r] and [l] in [fənɛ̃tr] *fenêtre* and [tabl] *table* can easily be deduced from what has been learned about the voice (p. 150-151) ; it is necessary to guard against making [r] into the vowel found at the end of English words like *mister*, etc. The pupils will easily understand that with the correct unvoiced pronunciation, these sounds are apt to disappear in rapid speech. Finally we take up the sound [ɲ] in [kãpãŋ] *campagne* ; it is explained as lying between [nj] and [ŋ] ; it is best pronounced with the point of the tongue resting in the lower part of the mouth behind the lower teeth, but in using the word "best" I intend to hint that it is not strictly necessary to require this method of formation ; there are

also Frenchmen who (at all events before a vowel) pronounce it like English [nj] in *onion*.

With respect to [p, t, k], it is well known that in French they have not the aspiration that they have in English; since the difference is not so great, however, the English sounds may perhaps be used unchanged in the beginning. Then if one of the pupils notices the difference, which he perhaps will express by saying that the teacher pronounces [b] when there stands [p] in the book, or possibly by merely trying to imitate the teacher's sound by means of his own English [b], his attention may be called to the little breath which there always is between the opening of the English [p] and the vowel itself; this is not found in French, where the vowel after [p, t, k] comes exactly at the same moment as the opening takes place (either by the lips or the tongue), and therefore they sound to us like [b, d, g] (*capitaine* as if it were *gabiden*). Try a [p] without a vowel after it, first with a strong breath (somewhat like when you pooh-pooh something, but without any voice), then without any breath like a man puffing at his pipe (about the same sound as when soap bubbles burst); and then try to place a vowel after it<sup>1</sup>; it must come immediately, just as quickly as the movements of a soldier after the drill-master's command. Then [t] and [k] may be taken up in the same manner.

The French division into syllables (*il a =i | la, chaque écolier = fa | ke | kɔ | lje, |* etc.) is best learned by pure imitation, likewise the distribution of stress (accent); by

<sup>1</sup> This method of procedure follows in the main the suggestions of Klinghardt.

reciting or reading connectedly to the pupils and by always requiring them to say *the whole sentence together without any pause*, the teacher can counteract their tendency to pronounce each word separately in that monotone which is intolerable. Thus *il a été ici* is said all together in one with the vowels gliding over into each other, *a* + *é* sounding somewhat similar to [ai] in *lie*, and *é* + *i* to [ei] in *lay*.

German sounds are somewhat easier for Englishmen than French sounds, but yet there are several points to be noticed. In the case of some sounds, any skilled teacher will be able to follow the suggestions given for French, mutatis mutandis; in the case of others, like the two *ch*-sounds, he must in an analogous manner adapt his theoretical knowledge in phonetics to the practical needs of teaching.

Some people have found it inconsistent that I have no partiality for didactic theorizing in questions of grammar, but myself employ theoretical explanations in questions of phonetics. The explanation is not far to seek. Theoretical grammar, as it is generally studied, is more abstract, it is difficult, it is very comprehensive, and still it does not lead to the desired goal, which is grammatical correctness; the theory of sound which we want introduced is more concrete and it is easy, it is more limited, and it actually leads to the desired goal, which is a good pronunciation. This last assertion is proved by the experiences of numerous teachers in various lands.

Of late years, it has become more and more usual in schools to use a sound-chart in connection with the instruction in languages. On this chart, all the sounds of

the language which is being studied are arranged in systematic order, and are indicated with such large letters that they can be seen by the whole class ; various finesses are often used, as for instance to give the voiced and voiceless sounds different colours.<sup>1</sup> I myself have not used this contrivance, but I have heard from several foreign teachers, and now from a couple of Danish teachers too, that they are very well satisfied with it. The teacher points to a letter and gets either the whole class or one of the pupils to say the corresponding sound ; or the teacher may let A mention some sound or other, and B, who is standing at the blackboard, shows that he has caught it by repeating it and at the same time pointing at the symbol ; or if C makes a mistake in the pronunciation of a word which he is reading (or saying) D is to point, first to the symbol for the wrong sound, and then to the right one, etc. In this way, much writing on the blackboard, which would otherwise be necessary, is saved ; and besides, it may be of great benefit for the pupils always to have all the sounds in a connected system before their eyes (even if the teacher of course never intends to examine them in the whole phonetical system of the language as such).

The *elements of phonetical transcription* are learned, as we have seen, together with the corresponding sounds themselves. Now what is the use of the phonetical transcription itself? It seems to be commonly supposed that its votaries claim by its help to have "given the pupils a better comprehension of the single

<sup>1</sup> If the teacher does not care to prepare such charts himself, he can use Viëtor's Lauttafeln.

sounds and to have taught them more easily to produce them ; " its opponents attack this assertion and strike it down with true Quixotic zeal without stopping to think that it has never been set up by the advocates of phonetical transcription at all. These advocates themselves know as well as anyone what is but natural, namely, that a boy does not of his own accord pronounce a French nasal correctly merely because he has been shown the symbol [õ]. The pronunciation of the single sounds must be learned in other ways, as has been shown above, and for that purpose alone, all writing could very well be entirely dispensed with without resulting in any essential change in the character of the instruction. When, however, we use phonetical transcription already at the first stage, it is partly on account of the excellent help which it will afford later for quite a different purpose, which I shall come to immediately, partly because it really is of some *help* in the teaching of the sound-formation proper. It saves the teacher a great deal of repetition, since instead of always saying the sound himself, he can point to the symbol and get one of the clever pupils to say it for the others ; it makes the pupils see more clearly how many different sounds there are for them to pay attention to (while in exclusively oral instruction, perhaps one pupil will be inclined to hear [ã] and [ɛ] as one sound, another pupil, [ã] and [õ] as one sound) ; finally, the homogeneousness of the symbols will help the pupils more easily to comprehend the nature of the sounds themselves ; when they have learned to pronounce [õ], they will get the run of all the other nasal vowels more quickly when they see the same

flourish over them all ; the double parallelism in the four symbols

s ſ

z ʒ

will aid them in learning the corresponding relations between the sounds themselves.

However, in order to understand the greatest and the proper value of phonetical transcription, it is necessary to have well in mind the fact that there are two essentially different kinds of mistakes in pronunciation—

- A. Mistakes in the formation of the sounds, and
- B. Mistakes in the employment of the sounds.

We have mistakes belonging to Class A, for instance, when Englishmen use the *ng* combination in place of the French nasals, or when they diphthongize the French long, pure vowels, when they pronounce *f* or *k* instead of German *ch*, or [z] or [s] for German *z* [ts], [ə̃], as in *cur*, instead of [œ̃r] in French *œur*, when they pronounce French *dû* like the English *due*, etc.

Mistakes belonging to Class B arise if you pronounce French *gent* like *gant*, *peut* like *put*, or vice versa *eut* like [ø], German *frass* or *fuss* with a short, or *nass* or *nuss* with a long vowel, *bischen* with [ʃ], etc.

Both kinds of mistakes may occur in the same word, as when *München* is pronounced [minkən] or [mjuŋkən] instead of [m çen].

The mistakes belonging to class A are not due to the orthography ; those mistakes we can also make in languages whose spelling corresponds to the pronunciation ; they are largely due to our native habits of articulation, and they

are to be counteracted by means of the phonetical training which has been described above. If the foreign sounds have once been well learned in the introductory course, this kind of mistakes can only occur through carelessness or through the lack of continued practice.

Mistakes in the employment of the sounds (class B) however, are as a rule due to disagreement between the pronunciation and the orthography of each language ; they are not caused by our native habits of articulation, and even those that have learned all the foreign sounds perfectly (indeed even the natives themselves) are liable to make them in every new word which they see written, but have never heard.

*It is this last kind of mistake that phonetical transcription helps us to avoid*, it protects us against the mistakes which the different national orthographies actually seduce us to make. Phonetical transcription is necessary in the teaching of all languages. but of course, it may deviate from the ordinary orthography in greater or less degree in the different languages. In Finnish and Spanish, the orthography is so nearly phonetical that only relatively few changes are necessary in order to indicate the pronunciation ; in Italian, almost all that is needed is to indicate if *e* and *o* are open or closed, if *s* and *z* are voiced [z, dz] or voiceless [s, ts], and which single consonants are to be pronounced double (long). In German, the orthography is already much more capricious, but in languages like French, Danish, and English, the number of conflicting rules with all their exceptions is so great that the phonetical trans-

cription necessarily has quite a different appearance from the traditional spelling.

Max Müller once said that the English orthography is a national misfortune, and Viëtor has improved upon this observation by declaring that it is an international misfortune, since it is not only Englishmen but also all educated persons in other lands who have to be bothered with it. Now, by means of phonetical transcription the words of the foreign language are presented to us in a kind of normal or ideal orthography, where every letter always signifies the same sound, and every sound is always indicated in the same manner.

Some persons urge the objection against the use of phonetical transcription that it can never be made so perfect that it can show all the shades of intonation, etc., in the spoken language, so that it cannot take the place of a teacher's oral instruction. But we have never maintained that it could ; aside from private study without a teacher, which must needs always be more or less imperfect, we have always emphasized the exceedingly great importance of the teacher pronouncing the words for the pupils, and we have not recommended phonetical transcription as something to replace, but as something to support, the teacher's oral instruction in pronunciation. Even if it misses some of the very finest shades, it may still be of benefit, just as a table of logarithms can be very useful even if the numbers are not carried out farther than to the fourth decimal place.

Other opponents again have exactly the reverse objection to make, that our system of sound-symbols is too delicately

detailed for school use. Even if many people only say this because they confuse the phonetical transcription which is used in scientific works with the far simpler transcription which we want to introduce for school use, and which is by no means beyond the powers of comprehension of an ordinary pupil, still we have an answer right at hand. We are aiming at (and attaining) greater exactness than our predecessors cared for, but this is very necessary too, for the old school pronunciation was too unintelligible to the native. Besides, our system is constructed on such simple principles, that we attain to a higher degree of exactness with less trouble than you do with with far more difficult means. When mathematicians began to designate the value of  $\pi$  in decimal form (3.1416) instead of the fractional form  $\frac{22}{7}$ , they not only attained greater exactness but also greater ease in using the quantity in long calculations, since the decimal is easier to handle than the fraction. Our phonetical transcription may pride itself on exactly corresponding advantages.

It has already been tried in many old readers (to say nothing of the dictionaries) to counteract the injurious influence of the orthography on the pronunciation by means of different systems of designating the pronunciation, such as numbers over the vowels, strokes denoting length and curves denoting shortness, italicizing of the s's which ought to be voiced, or in other places italicizing of the silent letters, dots and flourishes above and under the letters. All such systems, just because they try to deviate as little as possible from the orthography, necessarily adopt a number of its caprices and thus become too complicated to be of

any real benefit to the pupils. But the phoneticians, by starting out from rational principles, have succeeded in creating systems of phonetical transcription which really meet all reasonable demands in the way of exactness and simplicity.<sup>1</sup> That they really are simple and easy to learn has been proved to me more than once in striking ways; in several schools where my books are used but where the teacher has been afraid of the phonetical transcription, the children have resorted to it of their own accord, when they came to a word that they did not know how to pronounce; several parents have also told me that they have familiarized themselves with the phonetical transcription in the books which their children used and they did not find it at all difficult.

Perhaps it is worth while here to consider the four ways in which it is possible to communicate the material of a foreign language to pupils. Either (1) the teacher may not let them use any writing at all, but give them everything orally; or (2) he may give them the orthography alone; or (3) he may give them orthography and phonetical transcription together; or finally (4) he may give them phonetical transcription alone.

(1) The first way obviously has the advantage that there is no sound-symbol whatever to confuse the clear apprehension of the pupils; it resembles the manner in which a child

<sup>1</sup> Besides, the different systems of modern phoneticians all resemble each other very much—far more than did the earlier arbitrary methods of designating the pronunciation (for instance, Walker's, Flügel's, Toussaint-Langenscheidt's, Tanger's, etc.). Any one who has learned Sweet's phonetical transcription can easily read Passy's or my own, and vice versa; the differences are hardly worth speaking of.

learns its mother tongue. It will also be the more in place the more the instruction can be brought to resemble the way in which a child first acquires language, that is, where there is only one pupil, or at least very few ; where the pupil (pupils) is (are) not very old, and especially not yet quite familiar with the secrets of writing ; where the teacher is a native ; and above all, where there is ample time. For we must not shut our eyes to the fact that this exclusively oral instruction in languages takes exceedingly much time ; much repetition is necessary, and the teacher has to have great patience. In schools it is only possible to have purely oral instruction as a short preliminary course of a couple of months at the most, before passing over to the use of writing in some form or other. Walter, who has tried both, is emphatically of the opinion that in class instruction phonetical transcription is much to be preferred to purely oral instruction, because the latter wastes an enormous amount of time, and the teacher cannot feel nearly so sure that the whole class is able to follow.

(2) The pupils are immediately allowed to see the traditional orthography, and the teacher gives them the pronunciation orally. The eternal repetition and the painful small corrections which this method craves make the lessons bothersome for both the teacher and the pupils, who almost always become slovenly out of sheer discouragement over the prodigious task before them. Of course there are some rules for the relations between orthography and pronunciation, but unfortunately there are so few without exceptions that certainty cannot be attained by ~~their~~ means.

(3). The pupils are taught the traditional spelling from the very beginning, but at the same time they are given an antidote in the shape of phonetical transcription, either in the form that every new word is phonetically transcribed in the glossary, or that (in addition) the reading selections themselves are transcribed. To be sure the advantages of phonetical transcription are made use of by this method ; several teachers have expressed their satisfaction at the results thus obtained, and I have no doubt that they are better than when phonetical transcription is dispensed with. However, I am convinced that by this method it is difficult sometimes to prevent the less intelligent pupils from confusing the two systems of spelling, so that they neither learn the pronunciation nor the orthography very well.

(4) Therefore I have always (like the majority of the advocates of phonetical transcription) preferred to let beginners be employed only with phonetical transcription for some time, so that they may become quite familiar not only with the system of sound-symbols, but also with a good deal of the material of the language before they pass on to seeing the words in their orthographical shape too. The principle to be followed here is that of not allowing the difficulties to pile up, but overcoming them one by one. When the pupils know the symbols after the first few lessons, it causes them no difficulty whatever to read the texts ; these themselves (together with the meaning of the words, the grammatical forms, etc.) are therefore far more easy to learn than if the caprices of the orthography had to be mastered *at the same time*.

For this method, connected texts in phonetical transcription

are of course necessary, but such texts are also to be recommended to those who follow method No. 3, since there are many points of pronunciation which cannot come up at all in the transcriptions of the single words in the glossary, such points as appear only in combinations of words, in connected discourse. There is, for instance, French [ə] in *le de, demande, devenir, quatre*, etc., etc., which is sometimes pronounced and sometimes omitted, according to the number of consonants coming immediately before or after the [ə]: *à devenir* [advəni'r], *pour devenir* [purdəvni'r], etc. ; there is the varying treatment of the English *r* ; there are double forms due to the influence of sentence-stress, such as [kæn] and [kən] (= *can*), and many other phenomena of that kind, which it is really necessary to pay attention to, since no sentence can be pronounced naturally without consideration for these points, and since we cannot understand the natives without being familiar with them<sup>1</sup> —for we cannot require the French to make their language stiff and do violence to all their natural habits of speech to suit us. Only by using connected texts in phonetical transcription can the teacher require the pupils from the very beginning to read the foreign language connectedly, intelligently, and with some expression.

In conversations on the subject, I have so often had to answer the question as to whether I also want the pupils to learn to *write* phonetical transcription, that I must devote a

<sup>1</sup> I remember a lady's dismay when a Frenchman used the combination [stane] in a sentence ; she could not understand the sentence until I repeated it, inserting [setane]. "O well," she rejoined, "if he had only said [setane] ; we always said it that way in school." (*Cette année.*)

few lines to that question here too. Of course they must write phonetical transcription, but *learn* it—well, that is scarcely necessary, for it will not entail the least bit of extra work or trouble for them. They learn the symbols, and when they know them they can write any word whatever in phonetical transcription, if they only know how to pronounce it; this is a thing which follows of its own accord from the very nature of phonetical transcription. Dictation, in which the pupils are to write in phonetical transcription what the teacher says to them, presupposes only a correct apprehension of the sounds, and is a very good test as to whether they have heard accurately (cf. p. 95).

How long is a teacher to continue to use exclusively phonetical transcription? That is one of the most difficult questions, and I cannot venture to give a decided answer. The answer will surely always depend partly upon the age and maturity of the pupils and upon how much time can be spent upon the language on the whole. I myself have even dared to go so far that in teaching a class in English, when I only had two hours a week for two years before the final examination, I spent the whole of the first year on phonetical transcription (Sweet's *Elementarbuch*), and I did not regret it. In French in the lower classes, I once at least used phonetical transcription more than a year, and the only difficulty arose when some boys came in in the course of the year from other schools. At other times, again, I have made the course in phonetical transcription shorter, and on the whole I have experimented in various ways without coming to any certain result—except this:

*continue with phonetical transcription as long as possible.* For there is relatively so much more of the language itself learned in this way, that I have not the slightest doubt that the pupil who, with the same number of lessons a week, and at the same age, has read phonetical transcription for two years and orthography for half a year knows more of the language (not only of the pronunciation !) than the pupil who has used phonetical transcription for half a year and thereupon orthography for two and a half years (in all half a year more than the first boy). And then the phonetical transcription itself is such a fine means of training the pupils to minute exactness, because they really have to be constantly on the lookout in order to read neither more nor less than each symbol indicates; therefore I attach great *educational* significance to phonetical transcription.

But of course we have to begin to learn the orthography some time; and I suppose it is this transition more than anything else that has frightened people away from using phonetical transcription, because they imagine that it must be extremely difficult. But now all those who have dared to try phonetical transcription unanimously declare that they were surprised at the ease with which the transition took place; there was no trouble worth mentioning either for the teacher or the pupils; and they were surprised at the accuracy in orthography displayed by pupils who had been taught in this way. The psychological reason for this is probably to be found in the sharper perception which these pupils necessarily get of the difference between sound and writing, together with the fact that they are not

compelled like the others to learn many things at a time (spelling, pronunciation, meaning, inflection), but the orthography is separated out as something which is to be learned by itself about words with whose pronunciation and meaning they have already become quite familiar.

The best way of making the transition seems to be in going over some of the selections which have already been read and learned. First, the teacher says a few words about orthography in general, basing his remarks on English spelling ; he may call attention to the silent letters in *night*, *know*, the ambiguity of the vowels in *home*, *honest*, etc. Then a French piece the pupils know already is shown to them in orthographical dress ; it is gone through word by word in such a way that the pupils themselves may be guided to find out the most important relations between the letters and their sound-values. Here they for the first time have something to do with the accents and the cedilla, whose name they learn.<sup>1</sup>

In the following lessons the comparison between spelling and sound is conducted in the same manner as indicated above for grammatical observations ; sometimes starting from a certain sound, the students may point out all the

<sup>1</sup> The use of the French or German names of the letters of the alphabet when words are being spelled in English is merely affectation, and deserves only a shrug of the shoulders, especially since, as a rule, it is not consistently carried through, but is applied only to some few letters, *y* being called [igræk] or *ypsilone*, *ch*, [seʃ] or [tseha], according to circumstances, and this in the midst of other letters which are allowed to retain their English names with diphthongs and everything. It is quite a different thing when the teaching is wholly conducted in the foreign language ; then it is necessary to practise the foreign names of the letters, but then it must be carried through consistently.

words in which it occurs on a page or so; sometimes starting from the orthography, they may note and classify all the phonetical values of a certain letter. A few lessons will be sufficient for these preliminaries.

Ought the teacher to require the pupils to learn the orthography from the very beginning, that is, ought he to examine them in spelling or let them write dictation? No—that is not generally the practice according to the non-phonetical method either. First let them become accustomed to seeing the spelling, and in the exercises just suggested let them copy out of the book; later on they may be required to learn how to spell the words in the first line of every lesson, and in the course of a few months the pupils will be just as much at home in their French and German orthography as any pedant could require—and much more at home than they generally are now after a long time.<sup>1</sup>

Phonetical transcription ought by no means to be given up on beginning with the orthography: it is too good an aid to be dispensed with at this point. Not only ought whole pieces to be read, occasionally at least, in phonetical transcription, but it ought to be used in connection with all new words (thus especially in the glossary) in order to prevent all guess-work. Thereby is also obtained another important result

<sup>1</sup> Wer jemals in der schule die lautschrift als hilfsmittel zur erzielung einer besseren aussprache benutzt hat, der weiss, welcher nutzen aus ihr entspringt. der weiss aber auch, dass der schaden, welchen sie bezüglich der orthographie anrichten kann, sich nur auf wenige wochen erstreckt und äusserst gering ist, jedenfalls viel geringer als der schaden, welchen eine schlechte aussprache in der orthographie anrichtet. H. P. Junker, *Die neueren sprachen*, v. 99.

at a later stage, namely, the teacher may be *just as strict in requiring the pronunciation to be learned as the meaning*, whereas without phonetical transcription he cannot expect the pronunciation to be prepared at home. By steadily keeping up their practice in transposing phonetical transcription into practical pronunciation the pupils have something of value for their whole life, for, when they no longer have a teacher to ask about the pronunciation of a new word, they can obtain information about it themselves. That which was only a few years ago a possibility reserved for the distant future, namely, that all French and English dictionaries should give the pronunciation according to rational principles, is now, as we know, well under way to become a reality at any time.<sup>1</sup>

The use of phonetics and phonetical transcription in the teaching of modern languages must be considered as one of the most important advances in modern pedagogy, because it ensures both considerable facilitation and an exceedingly large gain in exactness. But these means must be employed immediately from the very beginning ; just as easy as it is to get a good pronunciation in this way, just as difficult is it to root out the bad habits which may become inveterate during a very short period of instruction according to a wrong or antiquated method. Timotheus, an old well-

<sup>1</sup> See especially Murray, Bradley, and Craigie's *New English Dictionary*, A. Schröer's edition of Grieb's *Englisch-deutsches wörterbuch*, and Rangel-Nielsen's *Fransk-danske ordbog*. I am myself transcribing the English words in Brynildsen's *Engelsk-dansk-norske ordbog*, two-thirds of which have already appeared. Edgren's French Dictionary should perhaps also be mentioned, but I have never seen it myself.

known music-teacher, used to demand double payment of all those pupils who had taken instruction with other teachers before they came to him ; the reason that he gave was that he had much more trouble in teaching these pupils than those who had not already acquired bad habits for him to break them of. Go ye and do likewise, ye teachers of languages !

I shall add a few words on the use of the phonograph. The apparatus has been very much perfected of late years and renders beautifully most vowels and all the general features of stress, intonation, etc. But the rendering of most consonants is still far from perfect ; you cannot always tell whether you hear a *p* or an *f*, etc., and it is impossible to rely on a phonographic record for minute shades of *s*-sounds and the like. It is clear, too, that even if the apparatus were nearer the ideal than it is now, it could not replace the teacher. But in the hands of an able teacher I have no doubt that it will prove a valuable help : it is patient and will repeat the same sentences scores of times, if required, without tiring or changing a single sound or intonation ; you may also have different records of the same short piece as pronounced by one man from Berlin, another man from Hanover, a third from Munich, and a fourth from Vienna, which may be very useful for comparisons, even if, as a matter of course, in your ordinary teaching you stick to one particular standard of pronunciation—and in various other ways phonographic records may be used to stimulate the pupils. But everything they hear in this way should at the same time be presented to them in phonetic writing—either in their readers

or on the blackboard. Perhaps, at some future day, the "telephone" invented by my countryman V. Poulsen will supplant Edison's phonograph in this as well as in other respects.

## XI

LIKE most works on pedagogy, this one too has been mostly concerned with the teaching of beginners. But now and then there has been a word about the instruction of advanced pupils, and now I shall add a few more suggestions about it. It is best to continue on the same lines as during the first years, only making those changes which circumstances necessarily demand.

The pupils must *read*—read more and more, read better and better books, books whose contents are of a nature to hold their attention and to give them as much all round information and development as possible—accordingly, as has been previously suggested, not solely works of literature. That sort of reading is especially good which gives the pupils some insight into the foreign nation's peculiarity in the widest sense of the word, and best of all is that reading which is apt to make the pupils love what is best in the foreign people. Tennyson is right when he says, “It is the authors, more than the diplomats, who make nations love one another”;<sup>1</sup> and teachers of modern languages should ever remember that it is their mission to make their countrymen know and understand foreign nations. By

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Lord Tennyson : a Memoir by his Son. (Tauchnitz ed., IV. p. 84).

making their pupils read good literature as well as by capacitating the younger generations of different countries for intelligent intercourse with one another, language-teachers all over the world may ultimately prove more efficacious in establishing good permanent relations between the nations than Peace Congresses at the Hague.

Some reading must be taken thoroughly, some may be *cursory*; it is perhaps best to have several gradations. Whereas in the beginning it is necessary to chew well in order to get all the linguistic nourishment out of the reading, later on it may of course be taken in larger and larger bites. Already rather early in the course of instruction, those pieces may be more lightly passed over whose contents are scarcely fit to be taken too seriously or which contain words which it is not absolutely necessary to remember. The teacher may simply let the pupils read such pieces aloud, explaining every word which they do not understand, but without basing any questions on them, and without requiring them to be studied for the next time. Later on, in the midst of more serious work, a month or two may be taken for reading a light novel through in the same easy manner. The pupils may also have private reading to do at home in addition to what they read in school. The teacher that I had in French and English in the upper classes in Frederiksborg School (H. Mathiesen) had an excellent way of making us desire of our own accord to read novels in the language studied; each one of us was ambitious to give in the longest list of volumes read when the teacher called for the lists at the first lesson in every month, and even if we of course read very rapidly and

never looked up any words, yet we learned a good deal, and I consider the habit of reading which I thus acquired to be one of the most valuable acquisitions that I got during my last years in school. In order to test whether we really had read the books as stated, our teacher sometimes talked to us about their contents, but he talked in Danish, sometimes he only made us open the books at random and translate a little piece. It is no doubt better to organize this practice, as it is now done in some parts of Germany, where the whole class reads the same book at home and must have read a certain amount by a certain day (after a fortnight's or a month's interval). Then they must be able to give an account of the contents in the foreign language, must also ask each other questions about the book, and may even occasionally be required to write down the contents as a written exercise; after the teacher has looked through these accounts, the pupils may deliver them orally and more freely, and this will give occasion for further conversation—all in the foreign language.

Most important, however, is the reading which is done *thoroughly*, so thoroughly that the pupils completely master both contents and language, and which therefore in both these respects ought to be as good as possible. In exercises with questions and answers, the contents naturally play an important part, and even if the pupils feel it is one aim, and a very important one, to acquire skill in the language, yet this aim is not always directly kept in view as such; neither does a child talk in order to practise using its mother-tongue, but in order to get some information and in order to communicate itself to others—and thereby it

learns the language. This feeling of reality becomes more and more prominent as the pupils become more advanced ; in the conversations, the pupils show directly, that they understand the contents, indirectly that they understand the language.

The pupils must *talk*—about what they have read, and that the talks are not mere farces with conventional “parleur” phrases, as our opponents would like to make out, I hope that I have shown sufficiently well.<sup>1</sup> When a certain teacher wrote somewhere that all the conversation that there is time for consists of the following five questions, which are asked of the monitor (and only of him) at the beginning of every lesson : “Who is the monitor? What date is it to-day? What day of the week is it? Who is absent? What have you prepared for to-day?”, and that he owes it to the truth to confess that it is only the minority of the pupils who at the end of the year are able to answer these questions correctly without hesitation, then this deplorable result is primarily due to the fewness of the questions ; he who only gets the tip of his finger dipped in the water three times in twenty weeks will never learn how to swim. It is secondarily due to the fact that the questions are stereotyped and have no connection with what the class is reading. Furthermore this same teacher says that he generally cannot spend more than a few minutes of each lesson on these “elementary

<sup>1</sup> Those who have their doubts may also read the accounts given by natives who have visited German schools where the instruction was conducted according to the reformed system, and who have had long talks with the pupils, in Walter, *Englisch nach dem Frankfurter reformatiōn plan*, pp. 152-165, and Miss Brebner, *The Method of Teaching*, etc.

exercises," since the reading, translation and grammar requires the rest of the time, in the middle classes, indeed, all the time, so that at this stage there is no time at all for any conversation. But if the talks are used for interpreting the text, two big birds are killed with one stone, and then it will soon be seen that skill in speaking increases like wealth ; if you have only reached a certain point, the rest comes of its own accord ; the accumulated capital multiplies surprisingly fast and willingly.

The pupils must *write*—original papers in the foreign language, not translations—that is, the form of language used must be as little as possible suggested by English turns of expression. But the subject must be concrete and limited. The chief danger that there may be in such original written exercises, namely that the pupils avoid all the difficulties and only use a slender supply of expressions, which they feel sure of, this danger is greater the vaguer or more comprehensive the subject is. For instance, it is best not to give broad literary subjects, such as "Die romantische schule," etc. A more limited subject is far better, both as an exercise and as a test ; for instance, an account of a little anecdote or of the newspaper report of some event, which the teacher has read to the class ; a description of what is to be seen on a picture, a renarration of some episode in the novel or in the historical selection which is being read in class, possibly in the form of a letter ; <sup>1</sup> a

<sup>1</sup> The letter-form is on the whole that form of composition which most persons have most use for, and which therefore ought to be practised most frequently. The international students' letter-exchange, which has just been started a few years ago, will be of great benefit—

summing up of everything relating to one of the characters in the text read ; a review of the line of thought in (a section of) some essay which has been read ; a paraphrase of some poem. Still more limited are such exercises in which a certain number of questions have to be answered, or such exercises in the use of synonymous words and expressions as have been described on p. 139.

But can such a method of instruction as has here been described really be carried out under existing circumstances? Are there not obstacles to be encountered on every hand? Yes; unfortunately there are things which stand in the way and make a good deal of trouble, but luckily they do not make it quite impossible for the new system to be used. As hindrances may be mentioned the shortness of the time, the apportionment of the time, the examinations, the teachers.

The *time* which is now set apart for modern languages is too brief. Therefore all teachers of modern languages ought to unite, and, together with all the parents who are dissatisfied with the arrangements in our grammar schools (and they are not few), they ought to agitate for the removal of that burden which weighs heavily on the school and which prevents the growing generation from getting an education which can meet the urgent demands of our times, I mean, the school must be delivered from the classical languages ; then there will be air and space for all that is now shoved into the background, among other for those who happen to get good correspondents and who themselves are not afraid of taking a little trouble.

things the modern foreign languages.<sup>1</sup> But—even in the scanty time which is now at disposal, there is much that can be done differently and better than hitherto, and the more the teachers in modern languages show this, and the more they can keep out of the old jogtrot way, the more will their subject be respected, and the more willingness will there be to extend the time when future reforms demand it.

The *apportionment* of the time is poor. When will people finally realize that everything cannot be learned at once? Many subjects, and with so few hours a week for each that the pupils forget what they have learned from one lesson to the next—that is a frightful waste of time.

No, learn a few things or one thing at a time, learn everything well and learn it to the end before passing on to the next.<sup>2</sup> And especially with respect to languages, there can be no doubt that it is best to take them up one after the other, not side by side; to every language that is taken up should be devoted many hours a week, and as a rule two years ought to be allowed to pass before commencing a new language; then the first is so firmly rooted in the minds of the pupils that merely a very few lessons a week will be sufficient for keeping it up and extending it,<sup>3</sup> and then the

<sup>1</sup> But of course the mother-tongue too; the study of nature, plants, animals, the human race; drawing and manual work, out-door life.

<sup>2</sup> An eloquent recommendation of this principle is to be found in v. Pfeil's previously mentioned work "Eins," but the same thought is also gaining ground elsewhere.

<sup>3</sup> Lessons which may be devoted not only to the language itself, but also to the acquisition of useful information in other departments as well; why not learn the geography and history of France in French during the French lessons, etc.

two languages do not injure each other nearly as much as if they were studied side by side before the pupils have mastered either one of them. As to the question at what age the children ought to begin to learn foreign languages, I dare not express any decided opinion ; I think I should be afraid to begin too early rather than too late ; first let the mother tongue have time enough to take a firm and lasting hold of the child's mind before other languages are admitted.

The worst canker in our school-system <sup>1</sup> is the *examinations*. Everything is arranged with a view to examinations ; the parents, the children, and unfortunately also a number of the teachers care for nothing but the results attained in the examinations ; the daily instruction is left to shift for itself, but the authorities will take ample care to guard against the least bit of negligence which might be shown by the examiners.

Examinations compel the teachers to lay undue stress on cramming. "Cram may be defined as the accumulation of undigested facts and second-hand theories to be reproduced on paper, handed in to the examiner, and then forgotten for ever. A crammed examinee differs from a crammed Strasburg goose in not assimilating his nutriment, and this would be a real advantage were it not that the process leaves him with a nauseated appetite, enfeebled reasoning powers, though abnormally enlarged memory, and a general distaste for disinterested study." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am here speaking of the Danish school-system, but I have a suspicion that this canker is not unknown in other countries.

<sup>2</sup> A. H. Sayce, *Fortnightly Review*, June 1875.

Examinations cause the mental and physical ruin of many more young men than we can afford. As a test of what a young man is worth in life, an examination is without any value whatever; as a test of how much really valuable knowledge he has, it is not worth much; and even as a test of how much he knows of what happens to be asked him on such an occasion, an examination is not nearly as reliable as people like to imagine.<sup>1</sup> And then examinations tend in so many ways to impede instruction which would otherwise be really profitable. The question "will that be required for the examination?" is always, either consciously or unconsciously, present in the school-room; it smothers the teacher's enthusiasm for communicating to his pupils what interests himself most; and it discourages the pupils' natural thirst for knowledge for its own sake. Just before the examinations, the whole school is seized with its yearly attack of its chronic examination-catarrh. In all departments, it is considered necessary to recapitulate for examinations; for a couple of months, the pupils are transformed into mental ruminants; they receive no new mental sustenance whatever, but have to be satisfied with going through the whole year's work once or twice more at as rapid a pace as possible. The matter which they have been given does not become more savoury on being served again; all the juice and strength, all that makes it tempting is lost, and nothing remains but what is toughest and dryest.

But even if there is much fault to be found with the

<sup>1</sup> A certificate from the school would be quite sufficient, if the instruction was under good control during the year.

system of examinations, yet it is not necessary to reform that before we can begin to improve the instruction. The examination requirements are not so great that we cannot meet them even if we do not from the very beginning plan all our instruction exactly with them in view. Although the chief stress in the examination may be laid on the translation and not on speaking, yet that is no reason why the latter should be entirely dispensed with. If by a *receptive* command of a foreign language is meant the ability to understand it, and by a *productive* command, the power to express oneself in the language, then I am fully convinced that anyone who merely concerns himself with the receptive side of it injures himself and acquires far less ability to understand it than if he had from the very beginning also aimed at a productive command of the language. Therefore our all round exercises will give our pupils at least just as much receptive knowledge of the language as is attained by the pupils of others; and even if it is rather provoking for a teacher who has taken a good deal of trouble to teach his pupils to speak to see that this counts for little or nothing at the examination, he can comfort himself with a good conscience at any rate—beside the pleasure which he and his pupils have had in their daily work together.

Nor ought any consideration for examinations to prevent anyone from the best kind of recapitulation, which is, not to wait until the approach of examinations, when much that has been read is forgotten, so that the teacher has to be on the lookout all the time to make sure that the pupils understand everything, but to take it up while the matter is still

fresh in the memory, so that it is not necessary to sound the pupils on every little point. Every chapter ought to be revised when it is finished, and every section or book ought to be gone over as a whole. Then the thoughts which were formerly occupied with details may be turned to the connected whole, and since the work can be conducted in the form of almost uninterrupted intelligent reading aloud, the pupils will be enabled to get approximately the same impression and the same enjoyment out of the matter read as a native gets.<sup>1</sup> If the reading has thus been gone over a section at a time at each natural break, it will be seen at the examination that these short revisions distributed throughout the year are more advantageous than a long, tedious recapitulation just before the examination, and besides the pupils have been kept fresh by reading something new up to the very end.

As the last possible impediment in the way of the reform method, I mentioned the *teachers*. Those times are now past when it was considered sufficient for a teacher of modern languages to have taken a degree in law or theology —to have studied Tacitus and Plato, and then by way of amusement to have read by himself a few volumes of *Revue des deux mondes* or some novels by Cherbuliez and Freytag. But even the younger generation of teachers who are better prepared will very often find that it is not so very easy to give good instruction in modern languages. It is a

<sup>1</sup> It has been previously suggested that various exercises in linguistic observation and classification may be given in connection with the revision, and that by means of such exercises the revision may be masked, as it were, and thus receive some of the fresh interest that attaches to something new.

shame how little is done to give high-school teachers opportunities for further improvement ; they ought to have abundant access to courses in advanced work, but especially to many and liberal travelling scholarships, so that no conscientious teacher in foreign languages need do without a tolerably long stay among the people whose language he (she) teaches. Poor pay and long hours, too, naturally lead to a teacher's looking merely to examination results.

But still I continue to hope that more and more teachers will avoid the old rut, and they will surely find that it pays to get out of it, even if, especially in the beginning, they have to expend more time and energy on their teaching, and on their preparation for every lesson, in order to meet the greater demands of the new methods. In Germany and the Scandinavian countries, exceedingly great efforts are being made to reform the instruction in languages ; in Norway, much of what has been recommended in this book has even been adopted in the official school-plans issued in 1897 ;<sup>1</sup> and fortunately the movement is also on the way to becoming strong in England. If this book by a foreigner can contribute ever so little to the encouragement and support of English language-teachers in their zealous and able efforts to introduce newer and better methods, then I am glad to have been enabled in this manner to pay off a little of the debt that I owe to England and to many Englishmen.

In closing let me try to sum up. The old-fashioned disconnected sentences proved to be a failure

<sup>1</sup> Similarly now in France.

for many reasons, and one reason was because there was nothing else to do with them but to translate them. They could arouse no interest ; they could not even be read aloud intelligently ; they could not be remembered in that definite form which they happened to have, so they could not be used as patterns for the construction of other sentences ; therefore the rules of the grammar, which was committed to memory, came to play such an important part. It all became monotonous and lifeless.

Our method tries to employ many means which mutually support each other. The pronunciation is not learned merely by the teacher's saying the word and the pupils repeating it, or by the pupil's guessing at it through the orthography and the teacher's correcting him. The latter plan we reject entirely ; the former, however, we use even to a larger extent than before, and we adopt in addition to it a rational description and indication of sounds. The improved pronunciation thus acquired also helps in a high degree in the acquiring of the other (signification) side of the language. Where formerly there was no other way of communicating the meaning of words but through translation, we have in addition thereto direct and indirect observation, explanations in the foreign language, etc. Where the pupils formerly had to commit to memory paradigms, rigmaroles and rules, which all had to be taken on faith, we let them investigate for themselves and thus get an insight into the construction of ~~the~~ language. And whereas formerly the only exercises were translation from the mother tongue into the foreign language, we now have a whole

scale of varying exercises, namely: direct reproduction (repetition of the teacher's words; answers to questions which are based directly upon the words of the book)—modified reproduction (repetition of sentences with changes of tense, person, etc.; answers to freer questions; asking of questions)—free reproduction (renarration) and finally—free production (letters, etc.). And since there is a sensible meaning in all that is read or said or done, the interest is awakened and held, and the instruction becomes not only varied, but what especially beseems living languages, it becomes in the deepest and best sense of the word really *living*.

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